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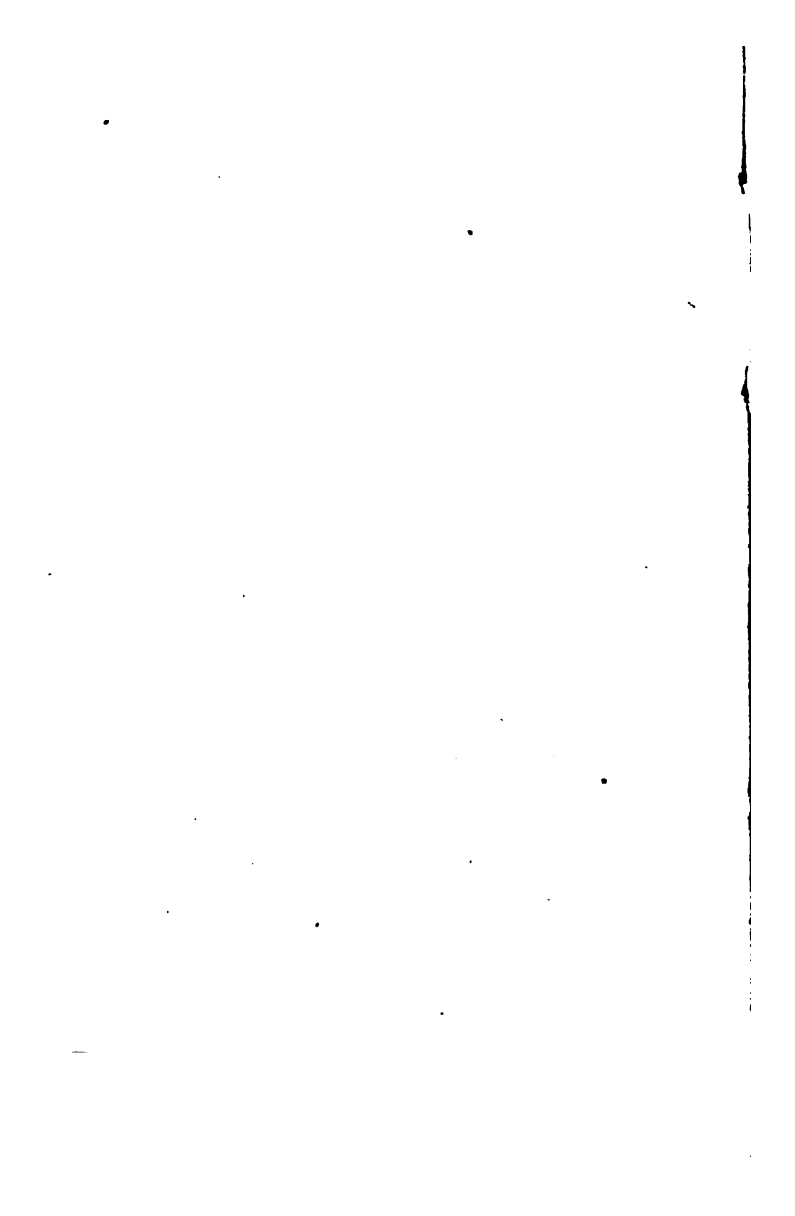


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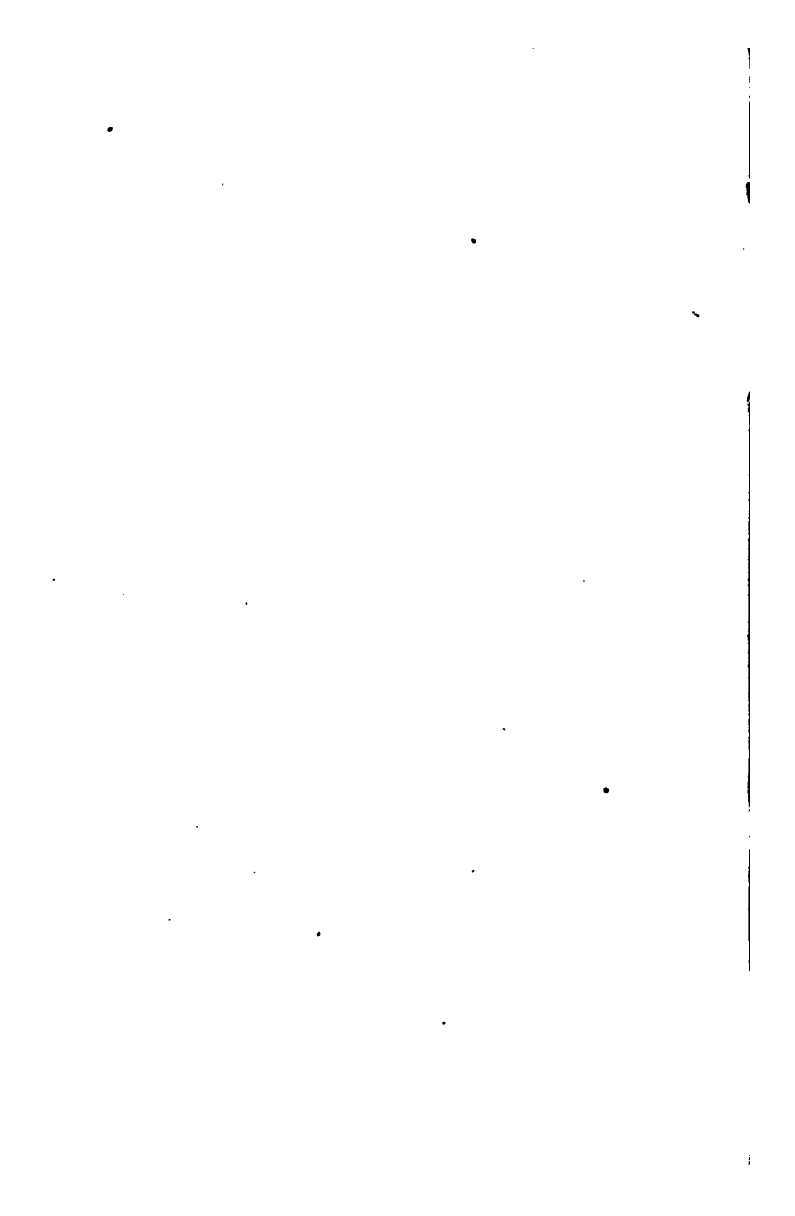
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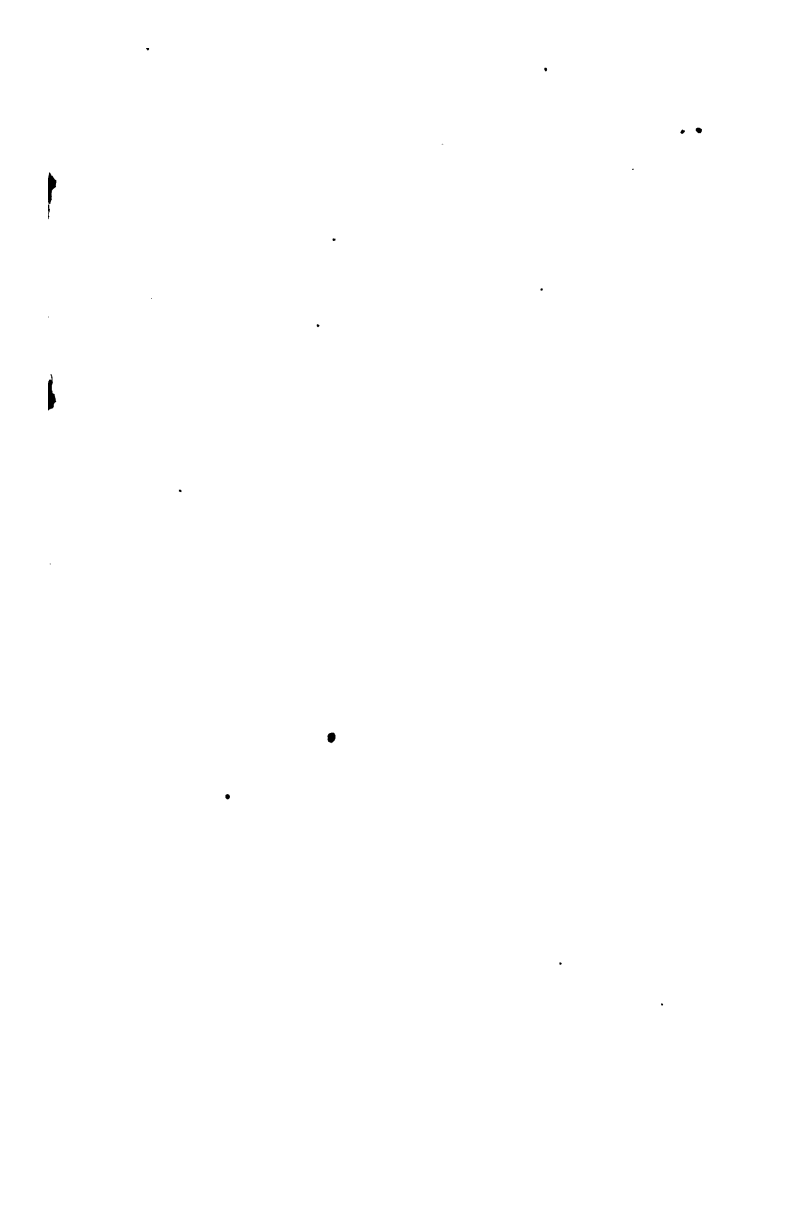
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H13
"BOARDING OUT."

31.
A TALE OF DOMESTIC LIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"KEEPING HOUSE AND HOUSEKEEPING," &c., &c.

Mrs. Dorah, (Pauze) Hale

"I left a home, a peaceful home,
With every comfort stored,
Thinking no troubles e'er would come
If I but went—'to board!'"

Mrs. BARCLAY.

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“BOARDING OUT.”

CHAPTER I.

“WHAT ails you, my dear?” inquired Robert Barclay of his wife, as she sat thoughtfully, twirling her tea-cup. “You seem, of late, very uninterested in my conversation. Has any thing gone wrong with you to-day?”

“No, nothing in particular to-day!” she replied, with an emphasis. “I have been thinking the same thing over and over again for some weeks; and is not that about as long as you have noticed my abstracted manner?”

“Well, well, do let us know what the secret is,” said the half-irritated husband; “for this playing upon words, and inquiries about this and that state of mind, is poor business for man and wife; and, for mercy’s sake, do let us abandon it now and forever. So tell me, Hepsy, at once, what you are brooding over.”

"Well, then, if you would know all (and you may as well, I suppose)," said the troubled wife and mother, "it was about a month ago I was dreadfully vexed with my cook and chamber-maid. You know when Polly and Sally had that 'flare up'—you remember Miss Jones was staying with us; and, as we sat descanting upon the trials of housekeeping, she said to me that 'she wondered I had half the patience I have; and were I in your cap,' said she, 'I never would suffer such annoyances; for half what it costs you now you might board out, and rid yourself of such troublesome scenes as those you have been over to-day. I know ladies,' she said, 'who never pretend to rule their husbands—only in this matter of housekeeping, and there they protest they will reign; and as we live but one life,' said Miss Jones, 'I am for making people as comfortable as I can while we stay here.' Now, husband, I confess this did put a new wrinkle in my head, as old grand-mother Lawrence used to say when a new idea struck her. I have thought the

matter over and over since then, as I just remarked, and I must say I am much disposed to try the experiment. What say you? Come, speak just as you think, for I have been frank with you, husband."

"Oh dear!" sighed out Mr. Barclay, "I am sorry such a whim has got in your head, for I see the result of it from beginning to end. Now, I suppose, not a thing will take a crooked direction in kitchen, parlor, or nursery, but boarding out will be the panacea. Why, just look at things as they are, wife, and I think I can convince you that I am as good a reasoner as Fanny Jones, your adviser."

"Don't reflect on her, husband; she would die if she thought you supposed a silly whim was put in my head by her; besides, she is not the only person of that mind. Do see Mrs. Bond, with her four children, at board: there she sits, with every attention; nothing to do unless she chooses, never troubled about servants, and always in full dress to see any one who calls, while I am a mere drudge. If I ring a

bell, ten chances to one the girl is on the shed, or cleaning the knives in the cellar; and yet there are the wages, amounting to three dollars a week, exclusive of board. Were I to urge nothing but motives of economy, Mr. Barclay, it seems to me the change must meet your wishes."

"Economy?" retorted Mr. Barclay; "that is a good word, but it must be applied to good uses, wife. You talk very foolishly, let me tell you. When one boards, who takes care of the children? who pays for the little attentions you receive? who does the washing, and ironing, and cooking?"

"Why, the landlord or landlady sees to getting it done, to be sure; I have no care if I board," still reasoned Mrs. Barclay.

"But I pay the bills, my dear. How much do you suppose the Mr. Bond you just quoted pays for himself, wife, four children, and nursery-woman?"

"Why, really, husband, I don't know; perhaps—it may be something like—fifteen dollars a week."

"Just double that sum, Mrs. Barclay, and you have it. He was speaking to me of his expenses last spring, and remarked, that, could he find an eligible house, he should return to housekeeping, for the very reason you assign for surrendering it, viz., economy!"

Mrs. Barclay resumed her sewing, Mr. Barclay read the evening paper, a friend came in to pass the evening, and thus ended the first dialogue of this worthy pair.

But once get a notion thoroughly in a woman's head, and she will cling to it like ivy to the oak! You may think you have reasoned it away, that she will calmly sit down and do as you desire; but if she is not fully convinced, the idea will revive, and gain double weight at every fresh glancing she gives it, especially if her personal ease is concerned. As I would preface, however, all women are not so; but the majority, who have been vexed, will avail themselves of a loophole to get out of the trouble.

Mr. Barclay thought for some days he had

silenced his other half; not a word was said about "help," or "children," or "disorder." The in-door arrangement worked finely; but there used to be an old adage, "After a calm there comes a storm," and *vice versâ*. Mrs. Barclay had been out much of late; she urged the plea that she had many friends to whom she was indebted for calls, and resolved to remain their debtor no longer. Among these, foremost on the list stood those who boarded. Not one of these did she neglect; and in no case did she have to reproach herself that she had not inquired their opinions and preferences between boarding and housekeeping; and although sometimes the recital was not altogether favorable to her wishes, she adroitly managed so to forget and remember, that the balance was always struck in favor of boarding.

CHAPTER II.

"AND so you feel no reluctance, wife, to giving up this convenient house, with its finely-warmed apartments; the bathing apparatus; the library, with its shelves so laden with books to amuse, to instruct, and divert you; the conveniences of good closet-room, and those spare chambers, where your friends are so well accommodated; the commodious yard, the fine prospect of the surrounding country, and all the many advantages which this residence possesses, and which you were so anxious I should procure?"

"No," said Mrs. Barclay, "not any."

"AND it will be a foolish waste of words for me to urge the advantages we now possess over a boarding-house; where the house is another's, where you are circumscribed in room, where the children are to be kept in one apartment, and, instead of hospitality, no

friends can or will more than call ; besides, the uncertainty, dire uncertainty of getting apartments where a comfortable home and a pleasant landlady, and agreeable boarders are all combined. You say, wife, you do not shrink from this trial, if you can but forego the great one of housekeeping."

"If, husband, you only knew what I do of the little daily vexations of living as we do, I am sure you would not talk thus. But how can you know ? There you are at your store from breakfast to dinner, from dinner to supper, and the hour or two of relaxation you take at home is undoubtedly pleasant. But what can you know of my vexations ? There I am, cooped up in the nursery nearly two whole days every week with the children ; for Sally is so slow with her washing and ironing, and so talkative with Polly, that all my hurrying her does no good ; and then there are so many stitches to be taken after all the seamstress does, and so much fault-finding in the kitchen because this or that thing is wanting, that I do,

. . .

husband, want to change. I will board just where you say, town or country, if you will but let me make the trial. If not, my health will be ruined. I wonder you don't see how fast I change ; all my acquaintances tell me so ; and dear mother used to say, ‘ Oh, Hepsy, your cares will be the death of you ! ’ Poor woman ! I realize it now you are dead.”

Mr. Barclay bit his lips, but he was a prudent man, and saw plainly the die was cast. He knew the temperament of his wife—head-strong, and not used to much contradiction ; and as he always contended that a woman ought to rule in her own house, he now plainly saw that submission was the better part of valor. Coming home not more than a week after he saw his fate, he brought in an auctioneer in a quiet manner, to ask his opinion how it was best to dispose of his furniture. Mrs. Barclay came down stairs, and the following conversation was heard :

“ Mrs. Barclay,” said the man of the hammer, “ I think I should dislike to risk some of

these elegant articles to the promiscuous throng which compose an auction; it is against my interest to advise thus, but I do dislike to 'knock off' to a second-hand dealer the rich and tasteful articles in a well-selected drawing-room, library, &c., at less than half the cost. I was suggesting to Mr. Barclay that perhaps you had better keep those pictures, and that suit of damask curtains. If you intend boarding, be assured you will need many articles to which you are accustomed; for I do not believe a more merciless set of people are found than your 'first-rate' boarding-house landlords. I have had experience in these matters, and, of course, as I give advice unasked, it is gratis. But, pray, let me ask your reasons for surrendering this beautiful establishment? Your husband is prosperous and rich; no mortgages or assignee's sale is here." He paused for an answer.

"My health, sir, requires the surrender."

"Oh! ah!" said our kind adviser; "then take a voyage to Europe, or pass the winter in Cuba or Savannah."

"But my children, sir—"

"No, Mr. G——," said Mr. Barclay, "it is a freak my wife has taken to board! I opposed it at first with all my might, but have now concluded to let her have her way; and although it will subject me to many trials, in no better way than experience can I show her the folly of her course."

"Well, well," chuckled the auctioneer, "you will give me a good job by the means, for which I give Mrs. Barclay my most profound thanks;" and, with a graceful bow, he left the house.

CHAPTER III.

IN most of the daily papers on the following morning might be seen the advertisement so common nowadays, with the caption, "Genteel furniture." We will give a part of the enumeration, that our readers may be in possession of the tasteful articles which Mrs. Barclay "felt no regret" at leaving or disposing of to the highest bidder! It ran thus: "On Monday, January 25th, will be sold a great variety of elegant household furniture, being the property of R. Barclay, Esq., consisting, in part, of superior new-style sofas and couches in crimson damask coverings; twelve elegant chairs to match; a divan; rich marble-top center tables; large-size French mirrors, original cost three hundred dollars; and the richest pair of girandoles ever offered at auction in this market; two splendid inlaid stands; rich gold-band coffee and tea sets; French China

dishes; one Britannia venison dish; sets of silver-handle knives and forks; silver-plated baskets, and a rich silver tea-service, very large and heavy, &c., &c. At 11 o'clock, a first-rate piano-forte of superior tone and finish; also, a beautiful seraphim. A variety of kitchen furniture, consisting of Wedgwood's Britannia coffee-pots and biggins, and many choice articles of culinary ware too numerous to mention, with which the sale will commence."

As Mr. Barclay glanced over his morning paper, he perceived the above advertisement, and, pointing to it, he passed it over to his wife. She read unmoved until the piano and seraphim were announced for sale. This was more than she could bear.

"Robert," said she, "those musical instruments must not be sold. I shall not permit it. What on earth did you mean to advertise my piano? As to the seraphim, I have already purposed what to do with that; and the piano I intend to carry with us where we board; perhaps I shall find time then to take music

lessons. Cousin Fanny Jones said she would, by all means ; and as a mark of gratitude for her services to us from time to time, I shall present her with our seraphim. So these will not go under the auctioneer's hammer." Mr. Barclay simply remarked, "The buckwheat cakes were unusually light this morning;" as if he had not heard Mrs. Barclay's determinations at all.

But breakfast with our good friends was soon dispatched, and Mrs. Barclay made her way to the kitchen, there to give orders for the approaching event. Poor Polly Murphy, the cook, had never heard of the projected affair ; for Sally, the nursery maid, and she had not exchanged many words for some days, feeling in no good humor with each other. Of course, Sally knew all ; for nursery women always have eyes that see and ears that hear, and, much to be regretted, sometimes tongues that tell family secrets.

"Polly," began Mrs. Barclay, "we are soon to break up housekeeping, and shall auction all

our furniture. There will of course be great exposure of kitchen utensils, and I wish you to make every thing thoroughly clean: to empty all the buckets and boxes, scour them thoroughly, likewise all the tin-ware, every pan, dish, and spoon. You have three weeks to do it in, and in the mean time our cooking will be very light and simple; and, if possible, I shall persuade Mr. Barclay to dine out, so that every opportunity may be given you to do your work well."

Polly stood aghast.

"And what does it all mane?" she inquired, in her peculiar dialect. "Sure, by the powers! I niver expected Mr. Barclay would quit this fine house; and isn't he going out of the counthrey, that a trick the like o' this he is serving us? Sure, indeed, Mrs. Barclay, I pity you much, and will clane every thing in the finest order; but my heart aches that you should be obliged to lave such a beautiful risidence."

Mrs. Barclay soon quieted Polly's voluble tongue by telling her it was not Mr. Bar-

clay, but herself that desired the change ; to all of which Polly would only reply, "And, sure, you are not the woman I took you to be."

However, the scouring process proceeded ; and, between muttering and reasoning alone with herself, Polly put a new face upon whatever passed through her hands ; not unfrequently, however, did she bless her stars that she should soon be rid of that "despert torment," the nursery woman, when she went to a new place.

But it is no small affair to forego housekeeping. The quickest way to end it is an auction ; but how often we sacrifice many choice articles in the thoughtlessness and excitement of the moment, which we greatly need afterward. Mrs. Barclay seemed not to foresee that at board any thing need be useful, as every thing would be supplied ! This fact alone tells the story that she never had any experience in the matter. But what was to be done ? Here was the day fixed for the sale ; things were in a topsy-turvy condition ; she

had no boarding place engaged; and Mr. Barclay seemed to rely upon her to procure one. But Mrs. Barclay was a woman of expedients, if not experience. She never met with an adventure, or carried out a long-concerted plan, but "Cousin Fanny Jones" was her adviser. Of course, now her aid would be indispensable. The letter-bag had not closed for D—— that day, ere a note was dispatched with the following contents. It may serve to enlighten the reader as to who was at the bottom of this troublesome change:

"Boston, December 20th, —

"DEAR FANNY,

"Our plans are all arranged. Little did I think, when we conversed together upon the subject of my giving up housekeeping, I should so soon carry into effect your plan. I call it yours, for you first suggested to me the expedient of ridding myself of domestic trials. Mr. Barclay was at first wholly averse to hearing a word about it; but, dear Fanny, I talked hours, yes! days, until he yielded! Was he

not a kind husband ? I never suggested to him that you were prime mover, lest in future time, if things should not turn out well, you might be reproached. But, cousin, I am wholly unacquainted with the process of 'breaking up housekeeping.' I thought we should never get furnished when we moved here ; and now I feel as if we never should get things in order for the sale, unless you come immediately and help me. You will therefore stand by me for at least three or four weeks ; help me look out a boarding-house, &c. Come in the four o'clock omnibus this afternoon. Truly,

"H. BARCLAY."

"Fanny," said old Mrs. Jones, as she read that note, "you have taken a mighty responsibility upon yourself ; it will never do for you to go first in all these affairs. It is not at all likely any boarding-house can be found for such a family that will give satisfaction. I am sure, much as I respect the Barclays, no money would induce me to take them for a single week."

"Thank you, mother, for your advice; but Mrs. Barclay and I will manage well enough. Barclay, you know, is always at his business; and, surely, you would not have me refuse such a pressing invitation as this note conveys?"

"Well, child, if you go, don't interfere too much between Robert and Hepsy; they are man and wife, you know, and he is a good, indulgent husband."

In less than four hours from the reception of the note Fanny Jones was at Mrs. Barclay's window, planning for her what she had best do, what articles had better be reserved, what disposed of, &c.

"But, first," said she, "we must see where you can get boarded. I will call on Mrs. Bell, and get a list of 'the most fashionable boarding-houses,' and the names of the keepers." Suiting her action to the word, she was soon in Mrs. Bell's parlor, with her pencil and memorandum-book, registering names!

Mr. Barclay behaved like a philosopher.

He even told Fanny that he appreciated her kindness, and desired her to accompany his wife in her perambulations, adding, "When you have found the place, I will make the bargain."

The next morning was a cloudy one; but, with business before them, the two cousins commenced their preparations in search of a new home.

"You had better," said Fanny, "put on your pink hat, and velvet shawl, and dark silk dress; for appearances, you know, count, when one goes among strangers upon such an errand as ours."

"No, cousin, I don't know any thing about it; and so I sent on purpose for you to tell me."

Fanny had recourse to her memoranda.

"Let us go to Mrs. Marshall's first," said she; "for her house is highly praised, and, if we can, we will secure a suit of rooms with her." And to Mrs. Marshall's they went.

A very polite, bowing servant took their ad-

dress, and leaving them for full fifteen minutes in a kind of ante-room, came back and informed them that Mrs. Marshall was "not at home;" that she received applications of business only between four and six o'clock P.M.; that her house was full, but some vacancies, he had heard her remark, would take place in April—all of which, however, she would inform them, would they call at the hours specified!

The next call of our friends was upon Mrs. Goriè, a lady of French extraction, who rented a house in ——— Square. Madame Goriè was luckily at home, and could be seen. Our friends were conducted up a winding passage to her splendid drawing-rooms. In a few moments madame entered. But, mercy! what a curiosity in person! Can any one describe her? Is it wrong to attempt it? Let me venture a little, hoping the sin, if it be one, will be pardoned; and, should the good lady see herself in a book, she may be induced to abandon a part of her "toggerly." Her dress

was of a nameless fabric, fancifully embroidered at the bottom with blue and scarlet velvet, edged with black and white beads. Her slippers were a kind of moccason, flowered with the porcupine quill, and upon her head, the crowning point, was a huge turban, with a frill about the face, and bows of ribbon of every shade and hue ! Besides, she was a bad English scholar, and it was with extreme difficulty she could be made to understand how many were desirous of procuring board, and what rooms they wished ; but *oui, voulez vous, &c.*, and a beckoning of the hand, led our friends to the vacated rooms. They were in the third story, and such rooms ! Seams in the floor some inches apart ; paint the color of a saffron dye ; a door that would not close but with a violent jerk ; with but one closet, already occupied by sundry vermin, and a back room of similar conveniences, give us a view of all she had "to let !" But two words were intelligible to Mrs. Barclay, and those seemed as if uttered by Madame Goriè in ridicule, they

were so singularly inappropriate: "Very convenient, madame!" Fanny smirked and winked at her cousin, and inquired, "What price?" "Only twenty dollar for familie of five," she made out to interpret as her meaning; "very cheap!" But they "would call again" if they decided. "*Oui! bon jour,*" and the door closed forever upon Madame Goriè. Nothing daunted, Fanny again took out her book.

"Do let us go to some real 'fashionable place,'" said Mrs. Barclay; "these can not be very good specimens we have seen. I desire, if I board, to find a house equal to the one I leave. Do you suppose I shall?" asked Mrs. Barclay, rather despondingly.

"Twice as good," promptly responded Fanny; "and, at any rate, you won't have such an everlasting care upon your shoulders;" and now they are at Mrs. W——'s door, a boarding-house of first quality, first price, &c.

The drawing-rooms here have an antique look; the red curtains are faded; the carpets are worn; the mirrors are tarnished; the

chairs are dull ; the couches have been much used, and the center-table is cracked ! And all these are in good keeping with the two antiquated sisters who keep the house. Age has wrinkled their faces, and stray silvery tell-tales peep out from beneath their caps ! A very unmusical voice, as if used to command, issues from the elder lady, who seems to have the principal management of the large establishment. Even Fanny quailed somewhat ; and Mrs. Barclay declared her voice faltered as she inquired " if they had vacant rooms." With an evasive answer, the old lady proposed another question to our friends : " Have you young children ?" James, and John, and little Fanny all rose before Mrs. Barclay's vision ; she could only stammer out, " Why—not very young ; my boys are eight and twelve, and my little girl but three years of age."

" Then, sister," said Miss Jemima, the younger of the two, to Miss Dorothy, the negotiator, " it's of no use, sister ; you know we can not have children of such ages. Why,

General D—— and Commodore F—— would leave at once, to be annoyed by a crying child. You may as well say the truth, Dolly—we don't board children." She puckered up her mouth, cast a significant glance at the ladies, as if to say, "We have no accommodations!"

But Dolly W—— never allowed persons to apply without giving their names. She inquired of Mrs. Barclay her address. Robert Barclay, commission-merchant, was a name she had somehow got identified with wealth; she thought, with her finger on her lip, as if by this action she quickened her decaying memory. "Barclay?" said she three several times. "Is he the gentleman who has advertised his furniture at auction?"

"The same, sister, that Colonel Gardner spoke of this morning; you know he recommended us to attend the auction, as there was a venison dish to be sold; and Colonel Gardner," she remarked, "is very fond of venison."

The maiden ladies seemed to clear up their throats, and really much more agreeable voices

were now heard. "I don't know," said the bargainer, "but we have a suit of rooms that will be vacated this spring; they are below us; a basement that the Spanish consul now occupies, and a small room that is occupied by Lieutenant Ames."

"If you please, we will look at them," said Mrs. Barclay.

Imagine, kind reader, a basement room exceedingly low in the story; a fireplace with little ancient marble tiles around the stove; an alcove for a bed, and a low, wide window looking directly upon the sidewalk, and your imagination will supply the rest. The small room adjoining seemed originally planned for a large closet; but our close, calculating friends had contrived to make the lodger therein believe it a bedroom; and these were the apartments soon to be "vacated," and, if they could dispose of their children, perhaps might be secured by R. Barclay and lady at the moderate terms of eighteen dollars per week!

CHAPTER IV.

ONE whole forenoon has been spent in perambulating the streets, and visiting "fashionable boarding-houses," the result of which you are fully apprised of thus far. Mrs. Barclay and Fanny have returned home, well tired with their unsuccessful efforts. Mr. Barclay came home rather later than usual to dinner, and jocosely inquired, "What success in your labors, ladies, to-day? You look dreadfully jaded. I think no place offers for me to bargain about."

I do not know that I have any where spoken of one trait in Mrs. Barclay's character; she had indomitable perseverance. Rather than surrender a plan she had fully determined to execute, she would almost submit to martyrdom. Vexed and chagrined as she already felt with her morning's discomfitures, both her cousin and herself resolved that no third person should know it. Under plea, however, of

giving the nursery maid an opportunity to go out, she left the dining-room to Fanny and Mr. Barclay, while she attended "little Fanny," the elder's namesake. A *tête-à-tête* between Mr. Barclay and Fanny now ensued, and let us hear how adroitly Miss Jones can accommodate herself to Mr. Barclay's views.

"I don't know as you agree with me," remarked Mr. Barclay, "but I have been, and am still, exceedingly adverse to the change we are about making; but, as we have proceeded too far to retrace our steps, I intend to bear with fortitude whatever falls to my lot. But I doubt not your cousin will, in a month's time, wish herself back again to her own domicile, even if she had double the care she now complains about."

"Nor I either," said the double-tongued Fanny. "I do so wonder," she continued, "she can persist in such a scheme! Mercy on us, Mr. Barclay! I only wish you could have seen the accommodations offered us this morning. The room which Polly occupies is as

far superior to any lodging-room we have seen as you can imagine. And then, the terms are so exorbitant; why, instead of economizing by boarding, it does seem to me it costs double. I am sure I had no idea of the sums charged for such indifferent rooms: my only wonder will be hereafter, why, instead of failing, as so many boarding-house keepers do, they do not grow rich and retire with handsome fortunes.”

“But,” said Mr. Barclay, “you do not realize how great are the expenses of this class of people. They frequently begin in debt, have large and expensive families to educate, and then so many wasteful servants and so many appetites to cater for, that, adding the above enumeration to a heavy rent in an eligible part of the city, I rather wonder as many get along as do.”

“But their names are legion,” said Fanny; and forthwith she drew out her memoranda, upon which were inscribed twelve names. With three of these our readers have already formed a slight acquaintance.

Mr. Barclay, although somewhat versed in Fanny's manœuvres, did not quite understand her. He did not suppose that two sets of opinions directly opposed to each other were in her expressions, for he did not know all she had said to Mrs. Barclay.

The afternoon of this day was cheerless enough. Mrs. Barclay had a sick headache, Fanny felt dissatisfied with her labors, "little Fan" was peevish, Sally had gone out, and Polly was all in confusion in the kitchen.

"I hope you are not going to give up at the very commencement of the game, cousin," said Fanny. "I beg of you, don't let your husband think you are repentant before you begin; keep up good courage; that alone will drive away the headache, and, if the sun shines to-morrow, we will try again our fortunes. I suspect we have made the worst selection on my list to-day. At any rate, I don't feel at all discouraged."

The next day came with its sunshine, and seemed to inspire our friends with renewed

zeal. They took a turn in another part of the city. But, patient reader, did you ever literally hunt for a boarding-place? If you are a bachelor, it may be you found one tolerably pleasant; if a lone woman, perhaps some vacant room looked inviting; if a school miss in your teens, some parlor well warmed, with its accommodations all at your service, might strike your fancy as a pleasant home; if a newly-married pair, who are desirous of avoiding “too many expenses,” you may find a boarding-house quite congenial to your new existence; but can you point me to a family, surrounded with every convenience, whose circumstances warrant not only comforts, but luxuries; whose children have ever felt free to roam in every apartment; whose accommodations, conveniences, and privileges combine every thing we denominate a “good home,” and did you ever know such a family to find what they called “a pleasant boarding-house?” Was there not something wrong in the location, something disagreeable in the inmates, some-

thing, in one word, at variance with their happiness?

And do you inquire how our friends succeeded to-day? Little better than yesterday. They found, out of six upon Miss Fanny's catalogue, but two tolerably decent rooms, and these were at such a distance from Mr. Barclay's business as to make them quite out of the question. Fanny gave up her memorandum and had recourse to the newspaper; there, in glaring letters, were advertised, "Good board for a man and his wife, without children, may be obtained in H—— Avenue." And, in another column, "Board, with furnished apartments, for a small family, may be found in a quiet, yet central part of the city. Address box 380, post-office."

To this address a note was soon dispatched; and having, in their conceptions, found a pleasant home at last, after many fruitless efforts, Mrs. Barclay and Fanny are at house 39 —— street, to ascertain "particulars." The landlord himself answered their inquiries at the

door. “Yes, he had rooms, and good ones too. Sit down a minute, and he would show them.” It so happened they were ushered into the dining-room, where was a long table, upon which was a soiled cloth, some cheap dishes, and a few dingy doilies at about one half the plates. “Don’t let us wait,” said Mrs. Barclay, “for the man to return ;” but Fanny had some curiosity which she was anxious to gratify. Soon the landlord, in slippers, made signals to them to follow him. Sundry pitchers stood at the head of the stairs, a female was sweeping them down, regardless of dust or dirt, and brooms and brushes hedged up the way ! but, clearing somewhat dexterously the way at the head of the second flight of stairs, he threw open two doors, the rooms which were “just vacated.” They had been occupied by three representatives to our general court ; but the landlord remarked, as they preferred a tavern, “he was suited, if they were.”

“And what are your terms, sir ?” said Fanny.

“Why, I want to get ten dollars ; but, as it

is late in the season, I would let these two rooms for eight to you, ladies."

Some slight demurring took place here about keeping a servant, for Fanny said "she was determined the old fellow should think she was somebody;" and much pleased with their adventure, our friends again found themselves at home.

"I declare," said Hepsy Barclay, "if we had not advertised our furniture, I would keep house till spring."

"Pshaw! nonsense!" said Fanny; "if you can do no better, you can go to some hotel till you do find a place."

It would be as wearying in detail as it was in actual suffering to enumerate the variety of houses our friends visited to procure board. Mean while, the day for the auction approached, and still no place was secured.

CHAPTER V.

THE sale of "Barclay's furniture" was the subject of a good deal of conversation among the circle in which they visited. Every body seemed apprised of the fact, and the ladies pretty generally gave Mrs. Barclay a call. At this particular time, these interruptions were sad annoyances. And, then, the questionings and opinions which almost every friend felt at liberty to give were very far from producing a comfortable frame of mind in Mrs. Barclay. There are people in this world who support a sort of personal dignity, and can so diffuse their own self-esteem as to awe or intimidate the curious from any minute interrogations ; but, unluckily, Hepsy Barclay was not one of this number.

Scarcely would any of her particular friends get fairly seated in the drawing-rooms, ere an exclamation might be overheard something

like this : " What magnificent parlors these are for a party ! How can Mrs. Barclay bear to vacate such a house ! I wonder her husband don't know better ! She is foolish enough to board ! Surely she never will be contented, let her go where she may ! "

All the above remarks would transpire while Mrs. Barclay was arranging her hair or dress, previous to coming into the presence of her acquaintances, for they were not all friends. Sally, the nursery woman, was sure to be detained long enough either in putting back a stray chair or adjusting the folds of a curtain, although she often made it look more awry ; but her object was to hear and fully report to Fanny and Mrs. Barclay all she heard, and sometimes what she did not hear. This should serve as a hint to such ladies as are prone to indulge in random remarks in the houses of those they visit.

This nursery woman was a great injury to Mrs. Barclay. Her practice was to take out " little Fanny " for an airing every pleasant

morning; and, as she was acquainted with some of Mrs. Barclay's friends, having long been in the family, they often used to say to her as they left Mrs. Barclay's house, "Sally, you must come in, and bring little Fanny to see my little girl or boy." This invitation was sure to be accepted, and sorry am I to record, that, in many instances, Sally was really more welcome than her mistress, as more information concerning family affairs was divulged by her. Since the advertisement of the sale, "little Fanny" had taken an unusual number of "airings," and made sundry visits to the little brothers and sisters, whose mothers did not fail to make many inquiries as to the future plans of Mr. and Mrs. Barclay. This eaves-dropping woman was sure to remark, "People don't know all the troubles in a family unless they live in it. Poor Mr. Barclay has a great deal to endure. I know it is not becoming in me to expose the secrets of a family, but we have strange work at our house sometimes." Perhaps the ear into which these words were

uttered would not be fully satiated until some farther revelation was made, and this was an easy matter to obtain by simply saying, "You need not fear I shall ever quote your remarks, Sally." In this way, not only Mrs. Barclay had suffered, but many other unsuspecting families. The children often get an "airing" at the expense of their mother's characters!

But it is time we look in upon Mrs. Barclay and her cousin. As we remarked, they were every morning filled with company; but from no one could any information respecting "a good boarding place" be derived, save old Miss Widdifield, a maiden lady, who had boarded some thirty years, and had by this time, as she shrewdly observed, "learned how to live." She informed our friends of a splendid establishment, of which they had never heard. It was kept by Mrs. Bates, widow of the late Lieutenant Bates in the United States service. This lady had vacant rooms—plenty of them; and, continued Miss Widdifield, as she thumped on her silver snuffbox, preparatory to the

information she was about to give, "Mind ye, Mrs. Barclay, I don't recommend this house, for I know nothing for or against it. I only know it is very pleasantly situated, right opposite to me; and yesterday there was a great moving out there. Miss Johnson, my landlady, says they have a great deal of this 'moving out business' going on there. We reckon they charge too high, and perhaps don't keep so good a table; but, then, our surmises are nothing; for you know, Mrs. Barclay, these boarding-house women sometimes say more about one another than they raly know."

"At any rate," said Fanny, turning to Mrs. Barclay, "we can go and see for ourselves."

"Well, my dears," continued old Miss Widdifield, "why won't you go over now with me; for I should like despert well to see how they do look inside. You know it is a kind of satisfaction to a lone woman, who sits all day looking straight across the street, to know how they look behind the curtains; for, bless me,

they never raise a curtain there, only when the man sweeps the parlors."

"But you think, Miss Widdifield, it is a 'genteel house?'" inquired Mrs. Barclay.

"Bless you, child, yes! I am afraid there is too much fashion; more fashion than food, Miss Johnson says; but, la! as I said before, she is a woman that is dreadful apt to talk."

In the midst of this conversation Mr. and Mrs. Bond were announced. Old Miss Widdifield put up her snuffbox, tightened her light sable tippet, and spoke a low word to Mrs. Barclay, to go over in the afternoon, and "be sure and call for her;" all of which was immediately agreed upon.

The arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Bond, who, although they had lived within speaking distance ever since Mrs. Barclay had inhabited her new house, yet had never called, put her curiosity to the test. She was evidently much disconcerted; but Mr. Bond soon put her at ease, by remarking he had conversed with Mr.

Barclay since the advertisement of his furniture, and finding he was about surrendering his house, he had asked permission of him to look over it a little ; and, if she had no objection, he would do so.

Mrs. Barclay now felt irritated that her husband had said nothing to her upon the subject ; however, like a prudent woman, she suppressed the above fact, and simply inquired of them if they thought of renting it, and resuming housekeeping. An affirmative answer being given, and the premises having been duly examined and admired by Mrs. Bond, together with repeated exclamations concerning the “spacious closets,” the “chambers connecting with one another,” the “bathing-room,” and the “fine prospect from the cupola,” she could not close her visit without wondering how Mrs. Barclay could think of giving up so fine an establishment and go to board.

“Hush ! my dear,” said Mr. Bond ; “by the time you assume Mrs. Barclay’s cares you may sing a different song.”

"And thereby lose your health, Mr. Bond, you may add," said Mrs. Barclay.

"I understand it all," said Bond, significantly.

And so he did ; for Barclay and Bond had talked confidentially more than an hour that very morning.

After Mr. and Mrs. Bond had left, Fanny and Mrs. Barclay adjourned to the nursery, and, in the presence of Sally, began to reflect upon Mr. Barclay's conduct in not giving them information, which he must have known, viz., that Bond and his wife were desirous of hiring the house.

"And I think," interrupted Fanny, "a part, or all the furniture, too ; for did you notice how very observing they were ; how intently they looked upon the drawing-room carpets, and the girandoles, and curtains ? and then, when she would touch him, thinking I did not see, he would nod ; and once I heard him say, 'Don't make any remarks, my dear !' That," said Fanny, shrewdly, "was, I suppose, because he hoped to get the articles cheap."

"I don't care for that, Fanny," said Mrs. Barclay; "if I can but get as good a boarding-place as they leave, they may have my furniture and take my cares; and didn't you notice, cousin, Mr. Bond's remark: 'When you have assumed all Mrs. Barclay's cares, wife, you may sing a different song?'"

"I did," said Fanny; "but, Hepsy, I did not like it; it seemed to me he spoke ironically."

"I don't think so," sighed Mrs. Barclay.

In the midst of this conversation Mr. Barclay entered.

E

CHAPTER VI.

"WHAT success, ladies, to-day?" inquired Mr. Barclay, as he tossed up "little Fan" in the air.

"You had better ask, husband, I should think, 'Why didn't you tell me Bond and his wife were coming to examine the premises?' then we should have been in better order about house. The kitchen was a scene of confusion; for Polly had just emptied the cupboards to clean the tin-ware; and my chamber was filled with trumpery that I left when I cleaned out that great chest; and the boys' room was a sight to behold! If you had only told us they were coming, things would have looked differently, I assure you."

Poor woman, she did not know a good house-keeper never need have an untidy-looking house.

"How could I tell you what I did not know

myself?” said Mr. Barclay, in a pleasant tone. “The truth is, I met Bond in State-street this morning, and, like every body that knows me, he inquired if I was about breaking up house-keeping ; if I intended to rent or sell my house ; and remarked, in either case he should like to avail himself of the opportunity to purchase or hire it. I told him I should rent it ; that more than a dozen applicants were on my memoranda now. ‘Then,’ said he, ‘put me first among them ; for, ever since my wife has been apprised of your vacating your house, she has bored me incessantly to hire or buy it.’”

“And how much do you ask for the rent ?” inquired Fanny. Mrs. B. never meddled with such matters.

“I told him,” said Mr. B., “I thought it would command a thousand dollars, but he should have it, being a friend, with a small family, for nine hundred and the taxes. He came immediately over to inspect it, and the rest you know about. But tell me, have you yet seen a place where you would like to

board? I have kept pretty still thus far, as you know; but when I get so far as to leave my old home, I must think about getting a new one; and I was going to give you, Mrs. Barclay and Fanny, but one more day to perambulate the streets in search of a place, and then, if you find none, I shall feel obliged to take the matter in hand myself. Bond says he thinks we can take the rooms he leaves. How should you like them, wife?"

Mrs. Barclay hopped out of her chair, and dancing up to her husband, only said, "Do get them. You know how often I have envied Mrs. Bond her pleasant window and easy enjoyment."

"But," said Fanny, "old Miss Widdifield has a place in view. Mrs. Bates, opposite her, she says, has a splendid establishment, and we are going to see that this afternoon."

"Very well," said Barclay, "look all you want to. I wish Hepsy to be fully satisfied; for as it is, in homely phrase, 'a dish of her

own cooking,' I will not throw an ingredient into it to which she has an aversion."

After dinner the two cousins proceeded to call for Miss Widdifield. The good old lady inhabited a "second-rate boarding-house," and quite an ordinary room up two flights of stairs. Mrs. Barclay thought of her remark, "she had learned how to live," as very inappropriate; but she was very cordial in her reception, and highly gratified with the prospect of her call on Mrs. Bates. And now we will conduct you, kind reader, to the interior of Mrs. Bates's "fashionable establishment." A man-servant, of course, bowed the ladies into the drawing-room, asked for their card, and being informed that their call was on business, withdrew to summon the lady of the house into their presence.

And here was indeed splendor! Mrs. Barclay's drawing-rooms contained nothing more elegant; indeed, her ottomans, lounges, and window seats were not so modern. "No wonder," thought Miss Widdifield, "they nev-

er raise the curtains ; the light of day would injure such delicate fabrics !" While the ladies remained patiently seated, gazing upon the splendid paintings which decorated the walls, the servant returned, saying, "Madam Bates would wait on them as soon as she had finished her game at *bagatelle* with General Frazer !"

At length she appeared. She was most queenly in figure, attractive in manner, and fashionable in dress, and listened to the purport of their business in a most deferential manner, and with an easy, *nonchalant* air. She informed her guests that she had just now rather an unusual number of vacancies, as one of the United States ships had just gone out of port, and many of the officers, although they nominally lived on board the ship, yet hired rooms, and took most of their food at her table. Old Miss W. here made the untimely remark that "she supposed she lived high, then, for all the officers she ever knew were dreadful fond of good living." Fanny wished the old lady farther.

"All the luxuries of the market I generally procure, ladies, and of course charge a price correspondent. I likewise keep plenty of servants; for I once boarded myself, and never did my poor husband find a house with a sufficient number of what he called 'useful appendages.' I have just procured a French cook, a man who is most thoroughly acquainted with his business, and serves us with the finest soups I ever tasted. He has two assistant women, who go and come at his bidding; and I believe I may say no better chambermaids ever were found. Indeed, ladies, I am relieved of nearly all care; but my expenses are enormous. But I will not inflict such a disagreeable feature in one's living upon you, but, if you please, I will conduct you over my vacant apartments, and I am sure you can find just the rooms you may desire, for 'I have large, small, and between ones,' as Commodore Gates frequently remarks."

The ladies followed, and often cast toward each other very meaning looks as they did so.

Here was first exhibited a large, very large drawing-room, finished and furnished nearly as tastefully as the one underneath. Adjoining this was Midshipman Andrew's private room, carefully locked; but a cough announced that the gentleman was within it. Over the entry was a large unoccupied chamber or parlor, as you pleased to make it: it had been used for both. Madam B. had a splendid French bedstead and marble washstand, which she furnished, if requested (the property of a surgeon in one of the steam-ships, but which he permitted her to use as her own in his absence). "All my gentlemen," she remarked, *en passant*, "are very obliging, and," she added, "excellent paymasters in the end, although I often suffer some inconveniences in waiting." Opposite this room, upon the other side of the house, was another, of the same dimensions, similarly furnished; fine closet-room was very common likewise; and above all these apartments were six more nearly as eligible, but all unoccupied!

Mrs. Barclay expressed great surprise at these vacancies ; so did Fanny ; but old Miss W—— did more. She quaintly remarked her surprise how any body could get a living in an empty house, when they pretended to keep boarders ; a sentence Madam Bates appeared not to hear. She seemed to have a convenient deafness ; and no treatise upon that delicate organ, the ear, ever yet prescribed for this disease.

Having shown all "the vacancies," she added, "And now, ladies, just take a peep in my dining-room." It was a spacious room indeed. A long table, which was folded again and again, as her family decreased, making desertions more visible, stood in the center ; upon it was the *bagatelle* board, and in a room leading beyond, Fanny declared was a billiard-table.

"You see we keep very comfortable here, ladies," continued Madam Bates. Behind her, upon the commode, stood two decanters, labeled "Sherry," "Madeira."

This was too much for old Lady W——, who was a thorough temperance woman. She burst out,

"Bless me, Miss Bates, here is a sight I haven't seen for years ! Do you furnish liquors on your table ?"

The cousins wished the old lady in California.

"Oh," replied madam, "I lay no restrictions upon commanding officers ; they are unused to obedience, and, of course, they board where every thing is made easy and agreeable. Temperance is a very good thing, but a glass of wine now and then never hurts me. I do not, however, usually keep my wines in quite so conspicuous a place ; but Colonel——"

And here the man-servant announced a box had arrived, directed to "Madam Bates, —— Avenue."

The ladies ought here to have withdrawn, but really they were entertained, and so prolonged their stay beyond all the bounds of etiquette.

"Bring it here, Sam," ordered the hostess,

"and quickly open it ; I can not imagine its contents."

And, sure enough, it is a headdress, and a very tasteful one too, with Commodore Shaler's compliments, and inviting Mrs. Bates to partake of an evening's amusement at the theater, with a bill at the bottom of the box announcing the play, "Romeo and Juliet," to conclude with the laughable comedy, "Three Weeks after Marriage."

"You see, ladies, a specimen here of my boarders ! they are whole-souled gentlemen ! This commodore is a very generous man. He has only been with me a month or so ; has a beautiful wife in England ; and so I feel at liberty to accept his attentions, as," she added, "you know no remarks will be made."

"Dear me, I don't know about that," said old Miss W——, "for she would speak," she said, after she came out.

Thus, an unwarrantably long call having been made, our ladies, promising to call again, left Madam Bates.

Old Miss W—— had hardly stepped upon the sidewalk ere she commenced with plenty of comments ; but the decanters seemed to be the burden of her song, and the explanation in those, she thought, she found in Madam Bates's volubility. She deeply regretted she had spoken of this place to Mrs. Barclay ; but, as she had thereby looked "behind the curtains," she comforted herself she had done no harm ; for Mrs. Barclay said, "Nothing on earth would induce her to board in such a house."

And with this day closed Mrs. Barclay's and Fanny's hunt for a fashionable boarding-house. Very few would have persevered so long in looking, but curiosity prompted Fanny, and a desire to get a "good home in a genteel house," Mrs. Barclay. They returned home, and narrated the particulars, as above described, at Madam Bates's, to Mr. Barclay.

"And what did you say the woman's name was ?" he inquired.

"Bates."

"Bates ? Bates ? Why, that is the very

woman Bond was talking about this morning. She has just gone into bankruptcy."

"What a comment upon a style without any means to carry it on!" said Fanny.

It was now left for them to secure Bond's rooms when he vacated them. Having examined them, and found them rather eligible, compared with those they had seen, Fanny and Mrs. Barclay concluded to take them without farther comment, for a beginning must be made.

F

CHAPTER VII.

It was now the day before the auction. Clerks were very busy assorting "in lots" the whole contents of the house; for Mr. Bond, although he had rented the house, and desired much of the furniture, concluded to take it at "auction prices," alledging that the auctioneer would thereby get his commission, and bystanders would not complain of unfair dealing.

Mrs. Barclay had removed to her new boarding-house sundry articles which, from conversation with Mrs. Bond, she found would be necessary; but how it could be she would need a copper saucepan, a small tea-kettle, two or three flat-irons, and other unnameable articles, she could not divine! Experience gives us knowledge we never otherwise learn.

It was indeed a busy day at Barclay's! Mrs. Bond was talking with Polly; and Fanny's inference was, that she was retaining her

services, for she heard Polly observe, "And sure two dollars a week is small pay for a head cook; in boarding-houses they give three; but, bating the privilege of going to the Church of the Holy Cross on Sundays, and keeping Lent, &c., I will take what I told you."

"Oh, that's it," said Mrs. Barclay. "Mrs. Bond did ask me about Polly, and Sally said she inquired of her as to her capability."

True, she did inquire of Sally, and she gave her a character indeed: "She was cross; wanted nobody in the kitchen; and a saint could not live with her without quarreling."

Other things, too, were narrated respecting conversations between Fanny and Mrs. Barclay about Mrs. Bond's manœuvring to get the house, and that they should pay for what they bought, &c., and it was probably this circumstance that induced Mr. Bond to buy every thing at auction.

The day of sale has now arrived! A long red flag proclaims the event to every passer-by. No permission to see the articles the day

before has been given ; therefore, at an early hour, the crowd have gathered. It has been previously agreed that Fanny and Mrs. Barclay shall have a seat in a retired corner, and watch the proceedings. Some sensitive ladies would not have desired this ; for when the actual "knocking off" of long-prized and valued articles takes place, and that irrevocable word "gone" is uttered, they would much prefer to be "among the missing." But Mrs. Barclay had no such feelings. "Was she not in ill health?" Had not "the care" of these very articles worn her out? Was she not going now to live at ease in "a boarding-house?" Surely, then, the novelty of the sale was very agreeable.

The crowd increases every moment. The sale has commenced in the kitchen, where, among the number, is seen old Polly, with her large, frilled Irish cap, starched for the occasion, and a white apron, only worn when her cooking is done. And there, too, are the sisters, Jemima and Dorothy Witherspoon, who keep boarders that have no children ! They

are standing beside that very coffee-bigin they spoke about. Let us see if they buy it.

"Twenty-five cents!" says the auctioneer; "only twenty-five cents! Why, it cost six times the money. Wedgewood's make—warranted to make good coffee. Whose bid do I hear? Gentlemen, let those ladies pass"—it has now reached one dollar, and Miss Jemima utters the sharp major key-note, "1 25"—"1 30 do I hear? Oh, madam, it is your bid still; 1 40—45—50!"—and still Jemima's bid upon herself!—"going at 1 50!—going, going, gone to Miss J. Witherspoon for 1 50, and too cheap at that!" says the man of the hammer.

Many of the culinary articles are put to Mr. Bond; indeed, Polly thinks there is quite enough left for her "to clane." Now let us peep in the drawing-rooms. Close by that gold-banded China sits that tawdry, old French boarding-house keeper, Madame Goriè, her black sunken eyes resting, as if fixed in a fit, upon the French coffee-set! Fanny and Mrs.

Barclay are inspecting her winter's dress: she wears a cloak lined with ermine upon the inside; but, evidently, the moths occupied it last summer; her hat is filled with "rag roses," feathers, and buckles; and Fanny wonders what she does with that huge turban when she wears a bonnet; for she thinks she discovers in the frill an old acquaintance. Poor woman! Don't laugh; she only has "a peculiar taste," unlike ours, in dress!

And who is not here? There are Bishop C—— and his lady; Commodore D—— and his daughter, who, report says, is on the eve of marriage to her majesty's mail-carrier; and Esquire Thorn and his maiden sister; old Parson G——, and that attendant lady always at his side; besides the middling, and, if one may judge by appearances, some of the lower and lowest classes. A lame man, of very ordinary appearance, seems to be much relied on by the auctioneer as being ready to bid. It is the "second-hand dealer" in —— street. He always buys, although his rooms are over-

running now with every kind of article in the housekeeping line; but these articles being choice, are not so desirable to him.

"The girandoles" are bought by Mr. Bond—so are the imperial carpets and the mirrors. This creates some distrust among a portion of the company. "That's Barclay's 'by-bidder,'" reaches the auctioneer's ears; and now he is forced to explain.

"Gentlemen—my address is not to ladies, for they are not so jealous—there is no 'by-bidder' here. The highest bidder is the owner, be he who he may. Mr. Bond has rented this house, and is ready to buy at a fair price what he wants for his future use. Mr. Barclay surrenders all, and quits these premises to-morrow, on account of the 'ill health' of his lady."

That was an impudent speech, which ought not to have been publicly made, and Barclay felt it even more than his wife, although all eyes were directed to her who had ever looked upon her before; and some wag remarked, "Better keep out of such a crowd, if she is very

ill; she may faint;" but people who will expose themselves to ill-natured remarks can generally have an opportunity to hear them in an auction-room.

The "India poy tables" are now under the hammer. These light, tasteful, and useful articles are much in vogue, and desired by sundry people. A smart bidding is carried on between Bishop C—— and the commodore; but the former gains the prize at about twice the original cost; his lady protests "she never saw any half as cheap before!"

At length the "China" is offered; but first comes that "Britannia venison-dish." Colonel Gardner now gives a significant wink to Miss J. Witherspoon; her sharp voice offers "seventy-five cents!" It thus stands; nobody wants it; and, in beseeching tones, the auctioneer inquires "if nobody eats venison among this assembly;" if so, he calls on them to speak. An elegant lady in rich attire, reclining upon a gentleman's arm, who wears an epaulette, bids one dollar; and it is hers! Jemima looks

awe-struck, so commanding is her appearance; and the name is given by the gentleman, which the lady whispers him to announce, as “Madam Bates!” Old Miss Widdifield here pulled out her snuffbox, and, Fanny said, actually sneezed, as she drew up a much larger quantity than usual.

It is now eleven o'clock, and “the piano” is announced, “the seraphim” having been withdrawn. “That is not Barclay’s piano,” said a by-stander, “but one that I have seen in two auctions before to-day.” The truth was told. Mrs. Barclay had moved hers to her boarding-house, and this was “sent in” by the maker, with Barclay’s consent, to make the sale just as advertised. Beware, friend, of purchasing an instrument at a public auction. It is said that “first-rate articles” are seldom thus sacrificed! No bid satisfactory was made upon this instrument, and, of course, it lies over to another sale! Bond has the pictures, excepting two or three choice pieces, which Barclay has removed. The library is untouched; the door is locked.

Thus, in a few hours, is partial desolation made visible: "hand-carts" and "furniture-wagons" take the places carriages have often occupied; the flag is withdrawn, and the sale is over. Poor Mrs. Barclay! you have accomplished all you purposed to do. Fanny Jones leaves for home, and Mr. and Mrs. Barclay, Sally, and "little Fan" are at board. John and Charles Barclay are with an uncle in the country until all things are settled.

CHAPTER VIII.

As much as Mrs. Barclay had desired this change, there can be no doubt that Fanny Jones has borne her along in it, and brought it about much sooner than it otherwise would have been.

But she is "at board;" that is, she is in rooms vacated by Mr. Bond and family. She has taken many of their articles, such as carpets, ottomans, and curtains; and they, in turn, have hers in possession. It is now the evening after the sale; the first opportunity Mr. Barclay has had to converse with his wife for the last three weeks, when she was not "sleepy," or had Miss Fanny at her side!

"Well, wife," said he, "now, I suppose, you are in expectation of much enjoyment. I hope you will find it; but, for myself, I must confess, I feel as old Miss Widdifield said she did at Madam Bates's, 'like a cat in a strange gar-

ret.' Ain't we dreadfully compressed here for room? and why don't we have access to this closet, pray? Bond said he had it, and I stipulated for every inch of room he occupied. I'm sure I pay enough."

"What do you pay?" inquired Mrs. Barclay, gaping; "thirty dollars, I suppose—hey?"

"Yes, and twenty more at the end of it."

"Why, I thought Mr. Bond paid thirty?"

"And so he did; but, you know, they kept no nursery woman, and their two boys only dined here; the rest of the time they were at his brother's. But I must see into this door's being locked."

Sally knew the secret; but she said nothing till Mr. Barclay left the room to inquire about it; for he, of late, kept Sally at a distance with her tongue.

Her explanation, however, to Mrs. Barclay was, that Mrs. Shortt begged Mrs. Bond not to show this anteroom to Mrs. Barclay; for she had an old bachelor, who occupied a room above, and, as he was very gouty, he had in-

formed Mrs. Shortt he should be obliged to leave the house unless he could procure a room upon the second story. The day before the Barclays went he was moved down. It may be inferred the old man knew this trick; for, however loud the knocking at the door, there came no answer.

Mr. Barclay was gone some time, and returned in no very good humor.

"I do believe," said he, as he thrust the poker to the very bottom of the grate, "that these women who keep boarders are the greatest 'spongers' in the world."

"Don't talk so, husband; Mrs. Shortt seems very kind. Sally, do run down and ask her to send me up a cup of strong hyson tea, a slice of toast, and a bit of cake, and some preserves, if she has any on the table."

Mr. Barclay saw it was no use to talk, so he took "little Fan," and played a game of "bo-peep" with her, and, soon after, took his tea below among the strange group.

Madam Shortt was a very, very particular

woman. She used to boast that "she always began with boarders as she could hold out;" and, it seems, she began with a vengeance with the Barclays. Sally did her message in a very proper manner, and even expressed Mrs. Barclay's regrets (which she did not send) that she was prevented by a severe headache from appearing at the table, and she wished her tea in her room.

"Give my compliments to Mrs. Barclay," said Madam Shortt, "and tell her it is in direct violation of all the rules of my house to send food to the rooms of the inmates; that if people are too sick to come to the table, we suppose them too sick to eat, and, of course, then they provide a nurse; but, considering she is a new-comer, I will to-night let you take the waiter from the kitchen, and carry it to Mrs. Barclay's room."

Sally was thunder-struck, but did as she was desired, and succeeded only in procuring a slice of dry toast, and a piece of very dry "sponge cake;" but, as she delivered Madam

Shortt's message first; neither the food nor tea relished, and Mrs. Barclay's head really ached worse than before. But she resolved not to complain. Sally took her tea with the domestics, and a poor meal she found it; "little Fan" had her tumbler of milk and crackers, and went to sleep. Would that we could, like tired children, drop into sweet forgetfulness, when vexed and tired with all about us!

In the course of the first evening, Mr. Barclay remarked to his wife that he believed they had a real "Tartar" to deal with, and she had better prepare herself to get along as smoothly as possible; "for," said he, "Bond and his wife will laugh well in their sleeves, if we should get up a quarrel to begin with, when they have boarded here for years. But I tell you one thing, wife, and that is, for breakfast, you had better equip yourself to appear at the table, for there are great inquiries about you. I heard a remark from a large, portly woman, just as I entered the front parlor to tea—not being perceived, I suppose—which, I think, re-

ferred to you: 'That's right, madam; I would not do it; if to-night, you may to-morrow, and it is setting a bad precedent.'

"What would you put on for a morning dress, husband? I meant Fanny should have brought me something suitable."

"Wear just what you please, Hepsy, only don't dress too much. The most genteel ladies, in the morning, never wear any thing better than a calico or de lain, I believe."

"Hadn't Sally better run over and ask Mrs. Bond what is proper to wear?"

"Don't be so foolish, wife; it is of no sort of consequence. There will be more important matters, I fear, soon to talk about, unless we go very even-handed."

And, sure enough, the first night was a trying one to Barclay. Scarcely would he get in a drowsy state, approaching sleep, ere a terrible groan, sometimes accompanied by an oath, would burst upon his ear! As he listened, a low, indistinct murmuring could be heard, as if two were in close consultation. Thus it

continued for some hours ; when Barclay, who was somewhat of a nervous temperament, and probably, at this time, looking back as well as forward to little domestic happiness, sprang from his bed, lighted his lamp, and had recourse to a book.

Mrs. Barclay, perfectly undisturbed, slept quietly till awakened by that unusual sound to her ears, "the gong," at its first summons to prepare for breakfast.

"Oh dear !" was her first exclamation, "can that be for breakfast ? I'm sure I never can rise at this early hour. Mr. Barclay, how came you up so early ?"

"Up !" said Barclay ; "I might as well have been in a cotton-factory all night as listening to such groans and oaths as came from that room."

"I'm sure I heard nothing, husband."

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CHAPTER IX.

LET us take a peep at Madam Shortt's breakfast-room and its inmates. That old gentleman at the head of the table is Captain Ingersoll, and the fat, portly lady at his side is his wife. The old man was formerly in "the China trade," and can tell you all about the opium and tea in the "Celestial Empire." But he knows more of the Chinese than Americans. Next to them sits Madam Bounce, the widow of an Episcopal bishop, who died in England some years since. She emigrated to America to ascertain some facts relative to her husband's right in certain real estate he possessed, which was sold, and the proceeds withheld on account of some defect in the title. She came over highly recommended to all the "right reverend bishops, rectors, and deacons," full half a score of them, and proudly does she plume herself upon her ancestry.

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Don't speak to her unless you are of noble extraction. She may be civil, but she will show you she is not to be familiarly treated ! Beyond her is the honorable senator from —— county. He is engrossed in conversation about some bills which he thinks, if they go through "the House," will find a "nonconcurrence" in the Senate. The gentleman with whom he is in such earnest confab is Simon Peters, a gentleman from his native town, and by whom he was introduced at Madam Shortt's. That maiden lady, who seems to carry the impression in her countenance that she is gazed upon and admired, is Miss Sylvia Dexter, a Sabbath-school teacher, and instructress in sundry ornamental branches. She is a "second cousin" to the landlady ; is probably "considered" in her board, as she arranges with great precision Madam Shortt's center-table. And just beyond her is a sort of facetious fellow they call "Mr. Caleb Flash." He is a "broker," and greatly amuses the whole set of boarders by descriptions of those who have been duped by

buying in "fancy stocks" just as they get a "downward tendency." He is now narrating to Mr. Holman, a lawyer of some ability, a pitiable case of a man who thus invested. Take care, Caleb, the very man you are conversing with comes in for a part of your wit; for he was drawn into a snare by speculating too freely a month ago! Beyond them sit Robert Barclay and wife, with whom our readers are familiarly acquainted. But hark! there is a great commotion; sometimes it sounds like a heavy footstep, and then a clumping noise, as if a stick of wood was falling. A man-servant swings the door wide open, and Mr. Bumblefoot is on hand! This is the identical man who swore and groaned all night, and thus prevented Barclay from getting any rest.

In a remarkably pleasant tone sounds the "Good morning, Mr. Bumblefoot," from Madam Shortt. "How did you rest, sir? You seem unusually lame this morning. Is that rheumatic affection in your foot again at work?" inquired the hostess, very plaintively; and still

more modulating her voice to its finest compass, "Pray be seated, Mr. Bumblefoot, in this arm-chair; I anticipated you were not so well this morning; and, Judith, warm that cushion, and draw that chair toward Mr. Bumblefoot that he may put his foot in it" (thought Mrs. Barclay, this is more attention than I asked for last night). "And now, Judith, run to the front cellar and bring up a pint bottle of cider marked upon the cork B., the same kind you got last night, Judith."

"Yes, ma'am."

"I am sorry you feel so ill, sir."

"So am I too," gruffly answered the old man. "It has been a night of torment to me: Sam can attest that, for he has been heating flannels all night."

While Judith is gone for the bottle, the old man, looking at the table rather sharply, is attracted by the new couple nearly opposite to him. "Is that the Mr. Berkly, Miss Shortt, you said was 'moving in' yesterday?"

"Excuse me, sir, for not introducing you,

Mr. Barclay, this is Mr. Bumblefoot, a boarder of long standing in my house. Mrs. Barclay, Mr. Bumblefoot."

There are times when one is forced to be civil, and so it was here; for Barclay really felt indignant at the imposition of the landlady, and the disquiet the old man had occasioned him; but it must borne.

"Berkly! Berkly!" said the old fellow, in a coarse, gruff tone; "I want to ask you if your father was not a hatter down in Liberty Square?"

"No, sir, I claim no acquaintance or knowledge of such a man," dryly answered Barclay.

"Well, I knew another Berkly" (and here he twitched his great foot), "a man that kept under Faneuil Hall market."

"Oh, Mr. Bumblefoot, you have mistaken the name," said Miss Sylvia; "it is Barclay, not Berkly."

Mr. Barclay nodded.

"Now, Judith, reach the tumbler and cork-

screw, and draw up the stand, and I will take my breakfast here, where it is warmer," said old Bumblefoot.

Breakfast was dispatched, the table cleared, and still Madam Shortt was attending the old man. Sally and "little Fan" are sent to the lobby, a sort of closet, to get their morning meal. But "little Fan" "cries to go home;" persists she will not eat; and Mrs. Shortt opens the door and informs Sally that she can have no crying children in her house.

Barclay is coming down stairs, and hears it all. He is not a passionate man, as my readers know; but, having had no rest, and feeling imposed upon, and finding his child is to be driven off, his nature is stirred. With a bold front, he inquires at once of Mrs. Shortt "if she excludes all children from her table;" adding, "he intended his little girl should, in future, sit in her high chair, and take her food at the time her parents did."

Madam colored above her forehead, and burst out, "Mr. Barclay, I never have found

so unreasonable a man as you, sir, in all my experience of keeping boarders. Scarcely had you set foot within my doors before you demanded a key to which you are no more entitled than the pope. Then Mrs. Barclay wanted tea sent to her room, and now your child is to make another fracas. Mr. Barclay, it is a rule with me to begin as I can hold out; and I tell you, sir, at this early stage of the business, if you are dissatisfied, you may go to-day; but mind ye, you shall pay a month's board in advance. The child will never be seen at my table, sir, with my boarders; your lady will not have her tea sent to her room; and you may get the key to the ante-room—when I give you leave, sir!"

"That's right, Miss Shortt," mumbled out old Bumblefoot: "I won't stand by you any longer if you give up your rights. These women, Mr. Berkly," said he, shaking his finger at him, "ought not to be imposed upon."

Mr. Barclay explained; but of what avail is one man's tongue beside Mrs. Shortt's?

Barclay, however, is missing at dinner. Madam inquires of Mrs. Barclay "if her husband usually dines down town."

Things are not made smooth for our friends ; it is a "bad beginning."

"Hepsy," said Barclay, in the evening, "put on your hood, and we will run over to Bond's."

She did so. What is uppermost in our thoughts is generally first from our lips. The evening was, of course, spent discussing the singularities of Madam Shortt and her boarders, and much information was elicited.

"You may get along," said Mrs. Bond, "with the woman, but I have my doubts. I have borne all sorts of insults from her ; but of late she has learned better than to play the tyrant over me. She was always meddling with my children ; sometimes was severe ; and I have known her indulgent to a fault ; for 'Bonny' would do her errands, and sometimes it was a great convenience to Mr. Bumblefoot for him to stop at Cullen's and order a basket of Champagne."

"And who on earth is this old Bumblefoot?" said Barclay. "I really thought, at first, it was a nickname assumed by the boarders, so significant does it seem of his old gouty leg. The old rascal has been a severe trial to me thus far; for I got no rest last night for his hideous oaths and groans."

Bond looked at his wife, and thought of the ante-room where he had removed, but prudently kept silent, and for once, be it said in praise of woman, she kept her peace too!

"Old Bumblefoot is an Englishman; a real roast-beef eater and Champagne drinker. He gives great suppers sometimes, Barclay, and if you want to taste some of the best wines in the country, you had better cultivate his acquaintance. He has a large property in England, and came over to America some years since to take a berth in the United States Bank. When that went down, he made Boston his residence, and, somehow or other, took lodgings at Mrs. Shortt's."

"Husband," said Mrs. Bond, "you seem to

have forgotten a fact that has been told more times than you can count, that he came passenger with Madam Shortt's husband. Shortt was commander of the vessel he came in. Don't you remember Mrs. Shortt's tone when she used to say, 'Mr. Bumblefoot, if it had not been for your generous loans, I know not what would have become of poor me. I had not money enough to pay for poor Thomas's funeral charges when he died.' The fact was, Captain Shortt was a very intemperate man, and was greatly involved at his decease. She has one son, who has just gone out upon a trading expedition; but you will never hear her speak of him.”

“But really,” continued Bond, “the boarding-house is about as good as any you will find. It takes time, you know, to become domesticated; but when that is done, you will enjoy Flash's queer jokes, and old Ingersoll's sea tales, and even Bumblefoot's pleasantry will be amusing when he gets over this turn of the gout. But I charge you, Barclay, don't say the word gout

before him; always call it 'a rheumatic affection;' for the old fellow is terribly sensitive on this point."

"You must remember, too," continued our friend, "that you labor under great disadvantages at board, going, as you do, from this charming house and all its comforts. Why, I don't suppose you could induce my wife to leave it and again go to board if you were to offer her a kingdom. Every thing has worked admirably since we came here. Polly is a fine cook, and we get along in the most comfortable manner. Our boys enjoy it, I assure you; for it was a terrible cramped life to our children."

Barclay sighed; and Mrs. Barclay actually had recourse to her handkerchief, for a tear stood in her eye, notwithstanding she brought all the trouble upon themselves.

CHAPTER X.

THREE weeks have now passed, and with them has gone into the "oblivious stream" a long catalogue of trials. Mr. Barclay is not, as formerly, always at home in the evening; the air-tight stove gives him a headache, and so he visits his friends. Mrs. Barclay sometimes wonders he stays so late, but he tells her, "he prefers not to return till Bumblefoot is ensconced in bed, so annoying does he find him." Sometimes the head clerk and he are adjusting business at the store till a late hour; but oftener (oh! I hate to record it) Mr. Barclay is found in convivial parties! It has been decided, since that interview at Bond's, that their two boys shall remain a short time longer out of town, for, in reality, another boarding-house is on foot. And truly, here may we quote the old saying, we know not what to-morrow will bring; that to-morrow

finds the same company, as usual, assembled at the breakfast-table, save the unaccountable absence of Madam Shortt and Colonel Bumblefoot (for madam sometimes gives the old man this title). Miss Sylvia, however, presides with her wonted grace; and Captain Ingersoll seems in a high flow of spirits. Caleb thinks "he shall have an order to buy him some stock to-day." But all at once is heard a loud rap upon the table, and the old captain rises as if commanding a "man-of-war" ship.

"Fellow-messmates!" he begins, "I wish you to give me your undivided attention." (All are breathless; Caleb even puts his hand against his ear.) "We live in a world of change" (Caleb bows profoundly), "and these changes are about affecting us in a most sensible manner." (Sylvia wipes her eyes.) "Our ever-to-be-respected hostess is about entering the holy bands of wedlock with Colonel Bumblefoot!" (Caleb suppresses a cough.) "She intends vacating her present position one fortnight from next Thursday; and, from that

day, Captain Ingersoll will succeed her as your landlord, if you choose to put yourselves under his protection. He has often 'doubled the Cape,' and never wrecked a crew; and, before he hauls into port for the last time, proposes making one more trading voyage, if he finds a crew!"

"Amen!" ejaculated the bishop's widow, no doubt forgetting herself for the moment; but this conclusion was from her book of "Common Prayer."

Caleb burst into a roar of laughter, and, wishing to disguise the cause from the august lady who provoked it, said, "In short, Madam Shortt is no more to be in our midst!"

"I have one word more," continued Captain Ingersoll, "which is, that Colonel Bumblefoot desires me to make his compliments to every member of this board, and requests the pleasure of their company on Wednesday evening, February 29th, at this table, the evening previous to Mr. and Mrs. Bumblefoot's taking passage in the steam-ship for Liverpool!"

"Then, of course," quoth Caleb, "as 'the board' are invited, I am particularly so. Wonder how large an order I shall fill!"

I suppose every body has seen and heard the varieties of attitudes and expressions which are called forth by an agreeable surprise; but no imagination can do justice to Captain Ingersoll's announcement. After a little deliberation (for a breakfast is perfectly indigestible when such emotions are felt), it is concluded that a meeting of the aforesaid "board," at which Mr. Flash is to act the part of scribe and moderator, shall be held at Esquire Holman's rooms, to see what testimonial of respect shall be presented to Madam Shortt, "in consideration" of what Caleb calls her "shortcomings." Shall it be a silver cup? Not enough can be collected. A gold watch? Bumblefoot presented her with one yesterday. A gold pencil? Nobody ever saw her write a word! "In short," says Mr. Flash, "let every one give as his inclination prompts; in virtue of which resolution, I present Madam

Shortt with 'Dickens's works entire,' from his caricature of Americans to his Cricket on the Hearth!" Captain Ingersoll followed with a Chinese smoke-pipe; and the colonel and his other half gave a volume of Holy Writ, "to be read on the voyage." The bishop's widow gave "Remarks on Puseyism, addressed to the Thoughtful;" and thus from each one was some little token elicited, save Barclay! His old prejudice revived; the key, old Bumblefoot's remarks, and his being a new boarder exonerated him, it was fairly agreed on all hands. But Mrs. Barclay would not be thought "mean;" and, not going out of her husband's line of business (as he was in the cotton trade), she presented a piece of sheeting, which, madam remarked, in her card of thanks, "was just the needed article!" Suffice it to say, there is more laxity now in government where Madam Shortt resides. Even "little Fan" has her high chair at the table, and the nursery woman is permitted to get a little hot water from the kitchen, without being reminded that this will be considered an "extra!"

"But the wedding is near at hand," thought Mrs. Barclay; "Fanny Jones must be present; it would so amuse her." Of course, she immediately dispatches a note by the omnibus, and tells her of the strange affair, in which she is unexpectedly obliged to quit her boarding-house. "And," thought she, "what a merciful release is thus opened to us, without being bored by our whole round of acquaintances with, 'How came you, Mrs. Barclay, to make so short a stay at Madam Shortt's?'" Marriages and deaths seem sometimes wisely ordered! But let us hear Fanny's answer; and if surprise has been already experienced, what can we suppose were Mrs. Barclay's emotions now? This is Cousin Fanny's note:

"D——, Feb. 12th, —.

"COUSIN HEPSEY,

"I was just at my writing-desk, dictating a note to be sent to you, as your kind one arrived. Do not think me, Cousin Hepsy, a maniac, ranting in an untrue style, when I tell you I had accepted an invitation to stand as

bridemaïd to Madam Shortt the very day the announcement of her marriage was made to you ! My partner (for I will tell the whole) is Rev. Mr. Milnor, our former clergyman, now of your city, who knew Colonel Bumblefoot many years in England, and many since in America ; and, at his urgent request, has consented to stand nearest him during the ceremony ! But your exclamations are not over yet. I suppose, at no very distant day, your cousin, Fanny Jones, may sign her name as 'Fanny Milnor' You will please communicate this to your good husband ; and if I can be of any service to you again in a chase for a boarding-house, you are welcome to my services. As ever,

FANNY."

"Can it be so?" thought Mrs. Barclay, as she opened the letter, re-read it, threw it down, and read it over again. "It may be, after all, one of Fanny's hoaxes to surprise me."

But, then, she had often heard Fanny speak of Mr. Milnor ; she knew he called upon her

the last time she was in the city; that she walked out with him; and that she told her of his visits to a very indigent family, for whom she intended to interest herself. "Yes," said she, "I now can read it all;" and she so longed to communicate it, that forthwith she proceeded to her husband's counting-room. There she found him in earnest conversation, the conclusion of which was, "and I may depend on it to-morrow?" Every business man knows the meaning of that sentence, and, probably, most women too. They are portentous words! Her husband, at the time overburdened with cares in endeavoring to meet the payment of some heavy notes, and oppressed at heart with the little prospect of domestic peace before him, did not manifest an equal surprise with herself at the reception of the news she carried. Indeed, many had observed, of late, that Robert Barclay seemed depressed; and while his neighbors in trade attributed it to losses and rumors of unfortunate speculations, the friends of Mrs. Barclay only believed it to be

severe domestic afflictions ; that he had sacrificed his home, which every body knew he warmly cherished ; and, in exchange for reciprocal greetings of friends, he was forced abroad to wear out existence as best he might !

But there are many things to divert Mrs. Barclay from observing the moody silence which her husband maintains. There is to be a large party at Bond's ; report says he is introducing gas into his house preparatory to the event ; there is to be the wedding, a new boarding-house to be procured, and Cousin Fanny is to be married !

CHAPTER X.

It is all over, and the whole company waited upon Mr. and Mrs. Bumblefoot to the ship. Barclay alone was missing, he having deputed the Rev. Mr. Milnor and lady to take charge of his wife. But he has this day secured another house to board. It is nearer his business, and the reputation of the house is good. He is determined that John and Charles shall be in the family with themselves; for, somehow, misgivings come over him that he has of late neglected his parental duties; and he reasons that, if he is once more with his boys, the evening fireside will present an additional charm, as was the case in former days.

Scarcely, however, was the process of moving again completed, before "little Fan" was seized with the hooping-cough! The nursery woman, in one of her recent calls, exposed her to this disease.

“A bad beginning again,” said Barclay; “but, as Bumblefoot is gone, it can be borne.”

We will now look in upon the Barclays, since they have begun to live at Mr. Durgin’s. Here is a plain man and his wife, the former of whom was an early friend of Barclay’s; but he has “run down” in business, and “set up” a boarding establishment. Our friends have good accommodations at a fair price; the children are all about them, and permitted to eat at the same table with their parents; but (there always is a “but” in a boarding-house) they can not find a sufficient number of boarders to meet their expenses; besides, they have been much tried of late. A smart, dashing couple have lately decamped, and left them with vacant rooms and an empty purse, after enjoying their hospitality for some four months! The gentleman was a sportsman, and two hounds have likewise been kept at Mr. Durgin’s expense; both of which were sold yesterday at public auction.

Sally hears a great deal from another nurse.

ery woman, who boards in the house : that "a keeper" was put there a few days since, because sundry articles of furniture are unpaid ; and well does this correspond with Durgin's continued application to Barclay to "lend him a few hundred."

Now, had Barclay been apprised of these facts, nothing would have induced him to leave Ingersoll's ; but it is done ; and were it not for little Fanny's cough, he would not hesitate to make another change.

Sally seldom spoke to Mr. Barclay ; but hearing him reason thus one evening, she having a strong inclination to leave herself, suggested that a change of air in the hooping-cough is often very salutary.

Mrs. Barclay now sits in a willing frame to do just as is thought best ; for, since her children have returned, and Fanny is sick, she yearns after a home ! She would even rejoice could she but resume housekeeping, and thinks no complaint "of cares or ill health" should ever again pass her lips. It is to be supposed

that her husband understands this conflict in her mind ; but he is determined she shall fully repent before a restoration takes place ; although, to secure this end, he is almost a martyr to the cause !

Mr. Barclay has engaged rooms at —— Hotel. All his friends have told him that a "public house" is far preferable to a private one, because there is so much more independence in the former. But yesterday he met Caleb, who informed him of a vacancy at the above place ; and, as an inducement that he should secure it, remarked that he should commence boarding there himself to-morrow. This was very agreeable intelligence to Mrs. Barclay ; for all the real fun she had known since she left her own house had been suggested by Caleb's comical vein. Sally and "little Fan" are put in a carriage ; the latter much wrapped in flannel, but still the cold air gives the child a violent fit of coughing. Indeed, Mrs. Barclay thinks she has pined, and really feels very anxious, as she looks at her

lily face, after the suffusion has passed off which coughing occasions. Arrived at their new lodgings, Mr. Barclay commences going up stairs. At the top of the first flight Mrs. Barclay stops ; but, no ! higher yet ; up—up ! in fine, just sixty-five stairs above the basement story are her rooms ! To be sure, they are pleasant when once you reach them ; they are prettily furnished, and look more inviting than any place she has seen since she left her own house ; but the little sick child still says, "Mamma, I want to go home." There is something peculiarly subduing in the tone of an innocent sufferer not quite four years old ; and Mrs. Barclay could only weep, as she too, like the homesick little girl, "wanted to go home."

But there are many pleasant things about this establishment. Her first appearance at the lady's ordinary was so unlike the breakfast at Mrs. Shortt's ! Her husband, too, had many business acquaintances, who, with their families, found here what they termed "a comfortable home," and Mrs. Barclay, of course,

was soon introduced to these ladies, and began to feel once more as if she could move in society; for, since she has been at board, no single person has she met who has apparently sympathized or cared for her save Caleb! He, be it said in praise of his social friendly feelings, has often cheered her hours of despondency. Besides, he was a dear lover of play with "little Fan," and you may be assured that her present feeble appearance is not unnoticed by him. He carries something to her every day, and she now moans during his absence to see "uncle Cale" quite as much as her father.

There is a great deal of social feeling carried out in this establishment. The gentlemen often give oyster suppers, and Champagne clubs are very fashionable here, although two of the boarders are temperance lecturers, and the house is advertised as conducted on purely temperance principles. But this only means, to use Mr. Flash's expression, that "liquors are not furnished at the board." While the

gentlemen are thus regaling themselves at the suppers, the ladies not unfrequently get up a dance, and before the effervescence of the Champagne has subsided, the gentlemen are very nimble with their feet as well as tongues ; for an adjournment always takes place to the "ladies' sociable."

The worthy host, in addition to all these parties, upon the first Monday of every month makes all welcome to an elegant supper ! Now, to most people, this is a very unfit place to find "domestic happiness," in the old-fashioned sense of the word. That term once meant a private house, a few friends at one's fireside, a rational talk, a simple repast, and a breaking up by ten o'clock ! Now it means hot suppers, a great crowd, sparkling wines, cards, dancing, a few unmeaning compliments, and a separation after midnight ! The after-piece to the former was a pleasant retrospect of the evening, a closer bond of friendship, a clear head, a desire for farther acquisition ; that of the latter is a bad headache, loss of appetite, a

blunting of social tenderness, an *ennui* which makes us incapable of progress, and a distaste for the sober realities of life. And yet many people contrive to find "a comfortable home" with a family of children in this independent manner of living! But, alas! a day of reckoning comes, and fearful is the account!

To Hepsy Barclay this is a new life; but something such a one as she once fancied she should enjoy. The ladies of the house are extremely polite, and frequent interchanges of little attentions are given and received. She has already commenced taking lessons upon the piano, and her teacher admits she has a decided taste, although her husband much doubts the fact. She dresses, too, with much taste. The ornaments which were long useless are displayed and admired; and Mrs. Bride affirms that "the Mechlin laces which always adorn her handkerchiefs and collars are the richest she ever saw." And she ought to know, for did she not take the last of Plympton's lot at twenty-five dollars a piece! It was a little

unkind, though, for Caleb to speak of "Mr. Bride's having just gone through bankruptcy!" And we may now inquire, why boarding after this sort is not exactly in accordance with Hepsy Barclay's preconceived opinion of real happiness. She has nearly every thing furnished by simply asking for it; she has the advantages of "genteel society;" of excellent fare either in her room or at the ordinary; is in good health, and her cares are borne by others. But she has a sick child, a couple of roguish, truant boys, who will coast till a late hour, and will keep asking their mother "if she don't mean to keep house again;" and, more than all, she has a husband, whose clouded brow and short stay with her betokens no distant trouble. That near, familiar intercourse which Robert Barclay and his wife held together, despite of her indifference, which sometimes chilled him, has fled! It is only at the festive board, after freely partaking of the exhilarating draught, that he seems tolerably cheerful! Poor woman, she imagines no one

knows this but herself, and she most assiduously sets herself to work to forget it! But these are trials which all the combined forces of attraction can not effectually exclude from the mind's vision; they may be smothered in the glare of day, in the giddy crowd, in the evening gayety, but there is a night coming, and with it, with redoubled energy, conscience arouses and illusions vanish! Much as we dread the terrible tribunal, we can not evade it; let us thank a kind Providence that it is so.

It was a dark, stormy evening that Mrs. Barclay dressed herself for Mrs. Gale's evening "sociable!" Fanny was ill, but the nurse thought she was no worse than she had been; and as she could do "no good" if she stayed at home, and moped away the evening alone, why should she do it? Besides, she was in the house; it was very different from going in a carriage at a distance.

Soon after her departure from the room Barclay unexpectedly entered, bringing with him his clerk, with a ponderous load of books

Sally proposed to call Mrs. Barclay ; but no ! business was the order of the evening ; and to work in earnest went David and his master. All at once Barclay threw down the account, exclaiming, " My God ! I am undone ! David, put up the books ; they look worse and worse. Here is a labyrinth : this note of twenty-five hundred, that of sixteen, and those other liabilities, which amount to thousands ! "

Those other liabilities were unknown to David ; for the speculating mania in which Barclay had engaged to retrieve his fortune was an enigma to David.

" But, sir," said the clerk, " perhaps you can borrow these sums, and then a more favorable issue may make money easier."

" No, no ! " replied Barclay, " I have too much honor left to involve others by borrowing of them what I never can repay. No ! bad as it is, I will take advantage of the bankrupt act, and settle as best I may."

Mrs. Barclay returned about eleven. She was really glad her husband had come home ;

hoped he had not waited for her; and if he had, why did he not step in Mrs. Gale's room? they had a fine time, and Jerusha Long had sung so exquisitely, and Susan Chase had danced so magnificently; but, heavens! she looked at Barclay, and he had fainted in his chair! She threw open the adjoining door, where Sally sat patting little Fanny's back, to relieve and assist her coughing, and shrieked, "Sally! Sally! I believe Robert is dying!" With the aid of hartshorn, and cold water, and friction, his reason, however, returned; and in a few moments the tale was told: "I am, Hepsy, a ruined man!"

This speech, accompanied by rapid strides across the floor, really made Mrs. Barclay shiver like an aspen leaf.

"What—what," she stammered, "have you done?"

"Lost a fortune like a fool!" uttered Barclay; and his very teeth chattered as he spoke.

What a night was passed in that height of

despair, in that abode of luxury, in that place of social festivity, in that chamber of death ! What strong contrasts this life often exhibits ! Who could help moralizing over this scene ! Barclay walked the floor the whole night with the look of a maniac. No wonder his wife threw off her jewels in disdain, and cast aside her rich satin dress as of nothing worth ; for, in spite of all vanity and show, a husband's failure and a dying child will subdue the stoutest heart !

The night, we have said, was one of agony ; but the morning came with a sadder scene ! "Little Fanny" is seized with the croup, and life will be quickly extinct, if seasonable aid is not speedily given ! Caleb has gone for his physician, who is a Homeopath ; for he knows one of his skill can give relief. Barclay has run for a cordial at the apothecary's, which, Sally says, is excellent ; and, by this time, many ladies in the house are sitting by the little sufferer's cradle. She moans out a sentence ; Mrs. Barclay's ear is put to its parched

mouth to catch it ; she says, in almost inaudible words, " I want to go home ! " Poor child ! would that thy mother could carry thee to thy old nursery, for which thou hast so often pined ; but a better home awaits thee !

" And did you never try the application of cold water ? " inquires Mrs. Holden, a lady boarder. " I have known children saved in the very last stages of croup by a plentiful effusion upon the chest of the patient."

" I should not dare try it," says Mrs. Crane ; " ' Mrs. Kidder's cordial ' is twice as good ; " and thus, between them all, nothing is done but an application of hot flannels to the outside of the throat ; an experiment about as useless in a fit of the croup as to rub the back of a child ! But medicine has lost its power. Dr. H—— has arrived, and informs Caleb the child must die. And what a lesson is before us ! Barclay, who, an hour ago, was " a lost man," because he could not meet the payment of some notes, and Mrs. Barclay, who was fevered with the excitement of the gay party, are

now awed into a silent agony by that mysterious messenger, who has taken but a little child !
Who can doubt but a merciful Providence thus shows us how trifling are the hopes and disappointments which end in time, compared with the revelations which may any moment await us in eternity !

CHAPTER XII.

THERE are periods in our existence when the accumulated transgressions of years revive in a moment, and overwhelm us with dismay. “Little Fanny” is dead ; and Barclay and his wife, in speechless agony, sit beside her cradle. Sally is gathering up the scattered “toys” with which she last played, and sighing piteously that her little charge is no more. She wets her cold face, to preserve, if possible, her natural appearance ; for Mr. Flash has gone for an artist to take a miniature of the dead child. There is a smile upon her mouth, and her placid features plainly indicate that she has “got home.”

“Sweet baby !” exclaims the frantic mother, “how could I leave you to enjoy life away from your presence ?”

“Say not so,” said the father. “Hepsy, your unfaithfulness only adds to my grief ; for we

have both sinned against this lovely child, and no wonder she is now taken from us. Have I not a cup overflowing with sorrow? There is no hope for me either here or hereafter," reasoned the conscience-stricken man; "for I have been unfaithful to my duties for years."

"No, husband, you have not," said the wife, soothingly; "you have ever been indulgent and kind to me; and if you have been an enemy to any one, that was yourself."

Barclay's pent-up feelings now broke forth afresh.

"An enemy to myself? I was first one to you, wife, then to my children, then to my business, and always to myself. Had I but remained in that little, humble shop, where I first commenced business, and housekeeping above it, in those low but pleasant apartments, I should not have been disgraced by a failure! Had I not been foolishly ambitious to secure a large house, an expensive style of living, and to incur great risks in business to support it, we should not have been now at board! Had I

not been unnecessarily indulgent to you, that I might secure your pleasure, I should not have been so unfaithful to my parental relations! And this, Hepsy, produces my greatest misery. I date it far back—to the first false step when I left the simplicity in which I was educated to be happy. But our little one is gone, and I am a ruined man!" were the incoherent, choked sentences which often fell upon Mrs. Barclay's ear.

In this suicidal frame of mind—amid her husband's ravings—think you, kind reader, no slumbering consciousness was awakened in her heart, who could retrace every step of this downward course to herself? Had she not encouraged, perhaps first inspired the love of style in her husband? Did she not complain, years ago, of the disparity in which she was held by her acquaintances, because she inhabited so cheap a house, even when he could afford to maintain a better style, as he was now known as "R. Barclay, commission-merchant?" And when she at length attained her hopes,

and removed into one of the most elegant, commodious, and expensive houses in the city, and men-servants and maid-servants "came and went at her bidding," did she not complain of "cares and trials," and fret out existence until she left that home, and carried her purpose? yes! the unwise purpose of boarding! And when she and "dear Cousin Fanny" so long sought for a place where she might find a home free from all life's wearying cares, did she not sometimes wish, yes, half wish, that the children might be put away under the care of some judicious person, that she might have perfect ease and liberty? And now one is removed! Her heart acknowledged the justice of the decree. But the artist has come, and with him Mr. Flash, who most kindly offers every service he can render to the afflicted parents.

Barclay's heart is softened, and he is prompted to take his friend Caleb aside and divulge all his trials to him; so little do we know what a change excessive sorrow will work in us. But last night, in his confused and agi-

tated state, the thought of revealing to Caleb Flash what he is now about to do would have been rejected with disdain. Bond possibly might have been a private counselor ; but no other being on earth. Now he feels the “weakness of his own strength ;” and Caleb, the kind-hearted and facetious fellow-boarder, who is always a favorite wherever he goes, has won Barclay’s confidence ! He is just the person to whom secrets may be safely intrusted ; for he has a whole soul, a large acquaintance with the world, a ready smile or tear as the occasion suggests, and, on all proper occasions, as we have seen, a flow of wit which never wounds the most sensitive being ; and, more than all other weighty reasons why Barclay should place confidence in him, he is a temperance man ! Total abstinence is written upon his countenance and advocated by his speech.

Barclay asks an interview at four o’clock in the afternoon of this very day with Mr. Flash. It takes place, and he discloses all his affairs. To use Caleb’s expression, when he came to

the sentence, "and to-morrow I shall fail," "it went like a bowie-knife through his heart!" But then he saw commiseration was not the language he must use; it should only be the bright rays of hope, for despair seemed to have gained the pre-eminence.

But the little child in the placid sleep of death powerfully neutralized the proud heart of Barclay, as it respected what the world would say when his business should be suspended. And who should perform the funeral service? was the next question; and could the corpse be removed below stairs when prayers were offered? Barclay and his wife for some months past had not attended public worship; and Caleb suggested that his friend, the Rev. Dr. P., should read the service of the Episcopal Church. But one objection was made: Mrs. Barclay preferred that Mr. Milnor, Fanny's intended husband, should officiate; but, as he was invited to be present, and Cousin Fanny had already come to take a last look upon her little namesake, the objection was overruled.

The day of the funeral was dark and rainy. It was an occasion, however, of respectful sympathy in the hotel. All Barclay's friends, and the ladies who so lately had found in their new acquaintance, Mrs. Barclay, a woman with whom most were pleased, were present in the long dining-room, where prayers were read. Caleb seated himself between the two boys, John and Charles Barclay, having superintended with Sally their suit of mourning. At the close of the several petitions used in the prayer-book "for the burial of the dead," a responsive "amen" was audibly heard from a female voice! It came from the bishop's widow, who boarded at Mrs. Shortt's with Barclay and his wife. The good rector undoubtedly waited upon his friend, little understanding how haughtily she had aforesaid conducted herself as a fellow-boarder at Madame Shortt's! But the funeral was soon over. Little Fanny was placed in the receiving tomb, to be conveyed to that "garden of graves" (Mount Auburn) as soon as the spring appears; and Ca-

leb, with his characteristic generosity, has begged the privilege of erecting a little stone there, simply inscribing upon it "Fanny."

The death of this little child is of small account to the busy world; its funeral was unheeded by the passers by; it was no subject over which we ought to mourn. But are we not sometimes struck with what we term the dark and mysterious ways of Providence, which, in the end, produce light and clear the path of duty? No event, therefore, is really small whose results can be traced to such momentous issues!

The rumor that Barclay's notes were "protested" flew with electric speed through the business community. It was not alone the sufferers by the failure who felt an interest in the event. Men talked of it who had long known him; and some accounted for it in the fact that his habits had changed of late; that he had been "a disappointed man in his domestic relations," and that "oyster suppers never added to the value of a man's credit

when they were washed away with the exhilarating glass!" Others, too, had known of his speculating propensity of late. One broker had been heard to say he could tell of a merchant that was "prodigiously sucked in" when fancy stocks were quoted at a "downward tendency." All these rumors gained strength as they flew, and before night it was currently reported that Robert Barclay had failed for three hundred thousand; and some of the "knowing ones" anticipated it from his extravagances, bad habits, and extensive speculation in certain nameless "stocks," which may well be termed "fancy" until they assume some fixed value.

Holman the lawyer had executed a deed from "Barclay to Bond" within a month past, conveying his dwelling-house to the latter; and Mrs. Barclay had signed it just before she went to the — Hotel to board. But as she always gave all property affairs into her husband's hands, she thought nothing of the circumstance. These and other reports entirely

untrue were superadded to the list, and "Robert Barclay" was not a name in as good repute as formerly. But, although Barclay had supposed much surprise would be the consequence of his failure, he had no suspicion that the title of "a speculator," or of a man who had yielded to an appetite for "strong drink," had ever attached to him; for, in all his lamentations to his intimate friends, he carefully suppressed what had now become the most notorious part of his history, from the fact that he was once so clear-headed, so excellent a judge of all marketable goods in the manufacturer's line, and knew so well what varieties would suit foreign markets! Is not this another instance that those who use the glass too freely suppose for a long time every body is ignorant of the fact but themselves?

The day of the first development of one's ruin to the world, in a business point of view, is, perhaps, one of the most trying of our life. There is, to be sure, "the fearful looking for" of the days of anticipated calamity, and the ago-

nizing nights, when every expedient is thought over to avert it ; but the day which actually crushes the sensitive man, and makes him feel as if his doom is sealed, is " when his notes are protested, and he stands forth in the community as a bankrupt !"

On the day of this announcement neither Barclay nor his wife was present at the ladies' ordinary. Flash, it was currently rumored, was in the secret of Barclay's affairs ; and this piece of information was afterward traced to Sally the nursery woman, who overheard some conversation, and communicated it to some of the ladies in the house, who kindly invited her to their rooms to inquire more particularly about little Fanny's death and Mrs. Barclay's health !

Caleb, of course, was interrogated as if he knew ; but had they known him, it would have suppressed all questionings at once. He vindicated his friends as far as a prudent man could do so, and thus many mistakes were corrected, which put a better face upon things ; for Barclay was not half as bad a man as he

was represented. Well did old Miss Widdifield afterward remark, "Failures and deaths lay a man's character bare."

And now the surmises began, that "Barclay might save a little fortune yet" out of such immense liabilities ; that he had "an old head, and had made a sudden crash ;" and not a few suggested, were they his creditors, they should not feel in a hurry to settle for fifty cents on a dollar !

Flash heard all these remarks in the world, and they really gave him a renewed interest in the man. He had already formed a plan which he intended to propose to Barclay when the "nine days' wonder" had ceased. But his first work was to get him out as a man, and make him hold up his head as such.

He was first seen at the table among the fellow-boarders, and next in his counting-house. It was in his heart fully to reform himself from the day he left his little child in yonder tomb ! This determination, as soon as known, invariably secures friends, and when it is connected with a transparent integrity and an hon-

est surrender, creditors will not long remain inexorable. But it is the work of time to produce restoration to one's character and fortune. Let us hear some of Barclay's reasoning with his friend Flash.

“I intend,” he says, “to be an honest man; to suppress nothing; for, since the affair is known, I really feel better. There is a relief when the Rubicon is passed. Now I can give a bow and a cordial shake of the hand to my next-door neighbors, assured of their sympathy, if I but act as a man; and, to do this, I am aware that I must immediately reduce my style of living; this luxurious table and high board ill comport with my circumstances; and, besides, it is no place to educate boys like mine.”

“I know it all,” said Caleb; “but already at our table I count more than a dozen bankrupts, who are safely ashore on the continent of contentment. I only speak of this, because they are so apt to comment upon others, who have more recently than themselves got aground, as old Ingersoll used to say.

That evening our friends met again in Barclay's parlor. Caleb desired Mrs. Barclay's presence, and Cousin Fanny's, if she wished to hear some "good news." It had been so long since cheerfulness had been upon Mr. Barclay's brow, that now it seemed as if it gave him a new attraction.

"As I was in my office to-day," resumed Caleb, "a gentleman entered, who is a large shareholder in a certain corporation, whose credit exceeds that of any bank. He inquired of me if I knew a man capable of being overseer in a large cotton-mill. I asked him the qualifications. He replied, 'Honesty, temperance, and a business capacity are all the requisites.' 'And what salary?' 'Twelve hundred a year,' was the reply, 'and the use of a house belonging to the corporation.' 'Have you good schools there?' 'Yes, plenty of them; academies, public schools, and private ones.' 'Is there good female society there?' 'Yes,' retorted my friend; 'you can procure a wife worth having any day—a real domestic,

home-loving woman, Mr. Flash.' I told him, then, I knew such a man ; for my mind at once reverted to you, Mr. Barclay ; and shall I secure such a place for you ? It must be decided to-morrow, and the services will commence April first."

"Gratitude is a poor word in return for such a favor," replied Barclay ; and Mrs. Barclay wiped a tear as she uttered a feeble but heart-felt "I'm sure it is, Mr. Flash."

"I shall only regret your presence," said Barclay, "in our midst ; but as the cars can convey you to our door" (for, it seems, Barclay knew the very spot), "we shall not feel that we have lost you as a neighbor."

The day after this unexpected good fortune was fixed for Cousin Fanny's wedding-day ! It was a simple service, performed at her own home ; and Caleb, still a generous, kind-hearted soul, accepted an invitation, procured a carriage, and took with him Mr. and Mrs. Barclay, and the two boys.

"Fanny Milnor" has long since repented

that she ever suggested to Hepsy Barclay the plan of "boarding out;" for she has learned, better than ever, to urge a woman to pursue a course so directly opposed to her husband's wishes ; but she often quotes the line from her favorite author Pope,

"From seeming evil still educing good."

Not long since, Caleb and Mr. and Mrs. Milnor met at Mr. Barclay's residence at L——. Barclay had just returned from the city, where he had effected a settlement with one of his most uncompromising creditors. It was a happy meeting. Temperance, order, and "domestic peace" seemed to have made their abode in this dwelling ; and old Polly is once more returned to her former master and mistress, because her health demanded her to leave the city. Mrs. Barclay never complains of her "cares" in housekeeping ; she has, however, dispensed with Sally, the nursery woman. John and Charles go to the academy, and are promising boys ; and if ever a

murmur is heard in the family, it is instantly checked, as Mrs. Barclay is reminded of "Boarding Out!"

THE END.



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